

Prairie Soldier

THE JOINT NEWSPAPER OF THE NEBRASKA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Lyons becomes 32nd adjutant general

■ New adjutant general pledges support to Guard families, employers while continuing to lead state's preparations for upcoming overseas deployments

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

The Nebraska Military Department's new adjutant general pledged to continue the organization's legacy of being prepared for both the governor's and the nation's call while also ensuring families and employers receive the support they need.

"We have a long-standing tradition of responding to help our friends and our neighbors as well as for our missions overseas. This will continue on my watch as the 32nd adjutant general of the Nebraska Military Department," newly promoted Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons said shortly after accepting the colors of the Nebraska Military Department from Gov. Dave Heineman during a change of command ceremony held at the Nebraska National Guard air base mall, Aug. 23.

"These Soldiers and Airmen and civilians in our Emergency Management Agency will not let you down, sir."

Lyons, who succeeds Maj. Gen. Timothy Kadavy as the Nebraska adjutant general, said he realizes that he is accepting the responsibilities as the senior



Photo by Master Sgt. Vern Moore

Inspecting the Troops: (From left) Col. Daryl Bohac, commander of troops, escorts Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons, Gov. Dave Heineman and Maj. Gen. Tim Kadavy as the leaders inspect a formation of approximately 1,000 Nebraska National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, Aug. 23, during the adjutant general change of command ceremony in Lincoln, Neb.

Nebraska National Guard leader during an era of unprecedented challenges. He added he also understands the challenges are about to become even greater.

"2010 is going to be a significant challenge for the Nebraska National Guard in terms of deployments," said Lyons, speaking on a bright, sunny Sunday morning as nearly 1,000 Soldiers and

Airmen representing the major Nebraska Army and Air National Guard organizations looked on from a formation spread out in front of him.

"The good news is we will respond to that challenge as Nebraskans have always done. We will train hard to reduce the time at the mobilization station to ease the burden on our families and our

employers. And the Soldiers and Airmen that are here today... they will perform magnificently as they always have done."

"I'm going to keep my eye on supporting our families and our employers as they lend us their loved ones and their employees to make sure that we are doing everything possible to reduce the

See ADJUTANT GENERAL on 4.

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Newest armed forces reserve center opens in Hastings

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon
Assistant Editor

Distinguished guests including Gov. Dave Heineman, then-adjutant general Maj. Gen. Timothy Kadavy, and Hastings Mayor Vern Powers, dedicated the Greenleaf Armed Forces Reserve Center during a ribbon cutting ceremony, Aug. 14, at the Greenleaf Training Site in Hastings, Neb.

The Greenleaf AFRC is designed to support both the

Army Reserve and Nebraska Army National Guard mission requirements for the 21st Century.

It includes 62,376 square feet and 15,100 square yards of parking for government and private vehicles.

The Greenleaf AFRC will serve as the home for the Nebraska Army National Guard's Detachment 1, 1167th Brigade Support Company; Troop A, 1-134th Cavalry; Det. 1, Troop C, 1-134th Cavalry; Det. 1, 267th Ordnance Company;

and the Army Reserve's 295th Ordnance Company, Ammo Heavy Lift.

"This facility will help ensure Nebraska Soldiers are equipped with the skills they need for future deployments, with the goal to provide the best possible combat training to the units based here in Hastings," said Heineman.

"This is an important day for Hastings, for our state and frankly, for our country."

At a cost of approximately \$11.9 million, the facility is the

result of a 2005 Base Realignment and Closure commission recommendation to consolidate Army Reserve and Army National Guard facilities in Nebraska.

The BRAC commission evaluated each military installation and then provided an objective, non-partisan and independent review and analysis of military installation recommendations issued by the Department of Defense.

Along with other states, the **See CENTER on 6.**

Agribusiness Development Team returns to Nebraska after spending year helping local Afghan farmers grow new lives



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

Welcome home Dad: Staff Sgt. Robert Page gets a tearful welcome home hug from his six-year old daughter, Lexi, Aug. 28.

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon
Assistant Editor

On a sunny Friday hundreds of friends, family and distinguished guests stood in front of the Lancaster Events Center in Lincoln, Neb., holding American flags, yellow ribbons and homemade signs.

They were waiting to welcome home the members of the Nebraska National Guard's Agribusiness Development Team that had spent the last year in Afghanistan helping local farmers redevelop their nation's agricultural capabilities. With the Soldiers mere min-

utes away, the anticipation and excitement grew. After so many months apart, spouses, children, parents and friends could barely contain their excitement.

It's been a long difficult year, said Holly Page, wife of Staff Sgt. Robert Page, as she waited with daughter, Lexi, 6, and son, Carter, 2, Aug. 23. "It has been trying...but confirming that we could do it."

"We are just full of happiness and an extreme amount of pride."

Page said she and Lexi had been planning for this day for a long time. The biggest thing **See ADT on 3**

INSIDE

- State fair departure leaves uncertain future for Nebraska Guard museum 7
- Guard truck units use annual training to prepare 11
- Soldiers inform bosses about Guard training 12
- Air Guard dental unit helps out in England 13
- Soldier goes on white water adventure 24

NEWS DIGEST

■ Petraeus cites need for more training in critical warfighting specialties

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – The U.S. military needs more people trained in specialties critical to the fight against global extremism, the chief of U.S. Central Command said Sept. 23.

“The fact is, there are a number of still very high-demand, low-density skill areas” that need to be addressed by military personnel planners, Gen.



Petraeus

David H. Petraeus told attendees at a one-day, symposium held at the National Press Club.

After overseeing the successful 2007 surge-of-forces campaign in Iraq, Petraeus became chief of Centcom, which has responsibility for operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and

other parts of the region.

Petraeus recently queried the Army and Air Force about training more joint tactical air controllers. JTACs maintain communications and provide close-air support to ground units.

There’s a “big shortage” of JTACs who regularly serve with platoon-sized security teams and Special Forces’ units, he said.

Electronic warfare is another critical specialty, Petraeus said. Electronic warfare specialists manage and protect military communications. For example, the enemy has used cell phone transmissions to detonate improvised explosive devices. The enemy may also attempt to jam friendly communications.

Information operations specialists also are in demand, the general said, noting that Internet communications “is a battleground that cannot be uncontested.”

The enemy, Petraeus said, “cannot have free rein out in cyber space, anymore than they can have free rein or sanctuary in some kind of physical, geographic location.”

Other required skill sets include languages and knowledge of the cultures in which they are spoken, he said.

Realizing the need for and developing military occupational specialties that support worldwide counterinsurgency operations reflects the changed landscape the military has operated in since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

However, Petraeus said, the military now possesses leaders who have “demon-

strated the kind of flexibility and adaptability” required to succeed in irregular and counterinsurgency warfare.

The symposium, hosted by the Marine Corps University based at Quantico Marine Base, Va., was titled: “Counterinsurgency Leadership in Afghanistan, Iraq and Beyond,” but Petraeus told his audience that he wouldn’t address questions related to current senior-level discussions about the way forward in Afghanistan.

■ Air Force officials begin search for new tanker

WASHINGTON (AFNS) — Senior Department of Defense and Air Force officials announced the rollout of the KC-X Acquisition Program at a Pentagon briefing, Sept. 24.

Air Force leaders are seeking a replacement for the KC-135 Stratotanker which has been a stalwart of the tanker fleet for more than 53 years.

The department is announcing its acquisition strategy for a replacement aerial refueling tanker fleet for the aging KC-135 and KC-10 fleet, said William J. Lynn, deputy secretary of defense, Sept. 25. He termed the search to be a “best value” competition, not one based solely on cost.

“We tried to play this straight down the middle,” Lynn said.

Michael Donley, secretary of the Air Force, and Ashton B. Carter, undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics, also took part in the hour-long briefing.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates returned the KC-X program to the Air Force during an address he gave at the 2009 Air Force Association Air & Space Conference and Technology Exposition at the National Harbor Convention Center, Oxon Hill, Md., Sept. 16.

“I don’t need to belabor the importance of getting this done soon and done right,” Gates said. “I have confidence that the KC-X selection authority is in good hands with the service’s leadership team of Secretary Donley and (Air Force Chief of Staff) General (Norton) Schwartz.”

Donley said the KC-135 first joined the service’s inventory in August 1956, with the youngest one dating to 1964. The ever-accumulating age of the tanker fleet is driving this effort, he said.

“We need to move on with this recapitalization,” Donley said. Air Force officials hope to announce a KC-X decision in the summer of 2010.

Currently, there are 415 KC-135s in the Air Force inventory. The KC-X pro-

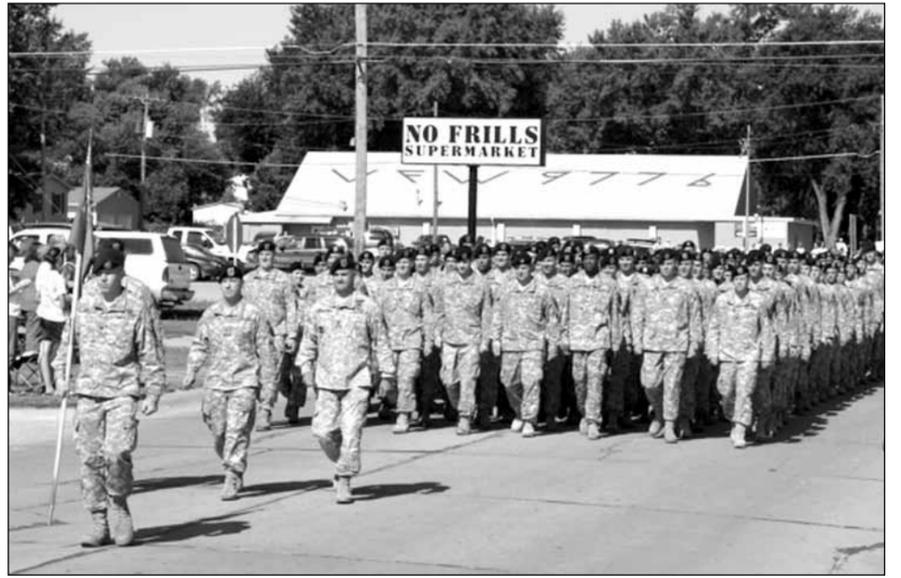


Photo courtesy of Command Sgt. Maj. John Payer

Soldiers bring parade to feet

National Guard Soldiers attending military schools at Camp Ashland helped bring a parade crowd to its feet when they participated in the annual ‘Stir Up Days’ parade in Ashland, Neb., July 18. A total of 175 Soldiers marched in formation throughout the 12-block parade. “Some Soldiers questioned why we participated before the event happened, but afterward saw it as a great event to show the surrounding community what we do as Soldiers and the quality of the NCOs attending the (Warrior Leaders Course,)” said Command Sgt. Maj. John Payer, Noncommissioned Officers Academy commandant at Camp Ashland, Neb. “This was (our) method to showcase our Soldiers during the ‘Year of the NCO.’”

gram calls for 179 new tankers over 15 years, according to Donley.

The first production KC-X delivery is planned for 2015, Donley said, with a planned initial operating capability of 2017.

■ VA to provide emergency checks to students awaiting school benefits

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – Checks for up to \$3,000 will soon be available to students who have applied for Veterans Affairs educational benefits and who have not yet received their government payment.

The checks were to be distributed to eligible students at VA regional benefits offices across the country starting Oct. 2, VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki announced Sept. 25.

“Students should be focusing on their studies, not worrying about financial difficulties,” Shinseki said. “Education creates life-expanding opportunities for our veterans.”

Starting Oct. 2, students can go to one of VA’s 57 regional benefit offices with photo identification, a course schedule and an eligibility certificate to request advance payment of their housing and book allowance. Because some students don’t live near one of those offices, officials

said, VA expects to send representatives to schools with large veteran-student bodies to work with veteran service groups in helping students with transportation needs.

A list of VA regional offices is available at <http://www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/offices.asp>.

“I’m asking our people to get out their road maps and determine how we can reach the largest number of college students who can’t reach us,” said Patrick Dunne, VA’s undersecretary for benefits. “Not everyone has a car. Not everyone can walk to a VA benefits office.”

Although VA officials said they don’t know how many students will request emergency funds, about 25,000 claims are pending that may result in payments to students.

The funds VA will give to students now are advance payments of the earned benefits for housing and books, and will be deducted from future education payments.

VA officials said students should know that after this special payment, they can expect to receive education payments on the normal schedule: the beginning of the month following the period for which they are reimbursed.

“This is an extraordinary action we’re taking,” Shinseki said. “But it’s necessary, because we recognize the hardships some of our veterans face.”

Bob Barker donates \$3 million to help build new brain injury center

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – The price appears to be right for former game show host and naval aviator Bob Barker, who donated \$3 million to help build a premiere Defense Department center for wounded warriors suffering traumatic brain injuries.

The donation brings the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund to its \$60 million goal to build the National Intrepid Center of Excellence, Bill White, president of the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, announced Oct. 7.

The 72,000-square-foot, two-story facility is expected to open next year next to the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

The Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund will pay to build the center and equip it with the most advanced medical equip-

ment for traumatic brain injury research, diagnosis and treatment, White said. Once construction is completed, the fund will turn the center over to the department to operate.

“This amazing gift puts us over the top,” White said Oct. 7 in announcing Barker’s donation to the effort. “Thousands of Americans have given to this important effort and Bob Barker has today stepped up to the task. We are immensely grateful for his wonderful generosity and his support for our nation’s service men and women.”

Richard T. Santulli, chairman of the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, called reaching the financial milestone to begin construction of the center “a great step forward in our

mission.”

The group raises money to provide financial help for families of U.S. service members killed in the line of duty and began raising funds for the new treatment center in 2007.

Barker, a naval aviator during World War II who’s best known as the long-time host of “The Price is Right” game show until his 2007 retirement, called his donation a way to give back to those who serve or have served in the military.

“I am very happy to do whatever I can to support the brave men and women who have given so much in service to our nation,” he said. “They have given so much for us. All Americans owe them a debt of gratitude for their tremendous service and sacrifice.”

Prairie Soldier

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Photo by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

Long Overdue Hug: 1st Lt. Brandon Burton gets reacquainted with his 1-year-old daughter Millie during the welcome home ceremony for the Agribusiness Development Team, Aug. 28. Millie was only three days old when Burton deployed to Afghanistan as part of the ADT in September 2008.



Photo by David Nore

Nice Hat Dad: Lonnie TenHunlzen plays with his son Zach, 5, during the Aug. 28 welcome home ceremony.



Photo by David Nore

Family Reunion: Staff Sgt. Nicholas Province is welcomed home by his wife, Karisa, and three daughters Sidney, 6, Madison, 5, and Liberty, 14-months, during the welcome home ceremony for the Agribusiness Development Team, Aug. 28.

Seat with a View: Kaylee Olson, 2, sits on the shoulders of her father, Staff Sgt. Justin Olson, as they wait for Olson's brother, Sgt. Jesse Olson, to return from a year-long deployment to Afghanistan as a part of the Agribusiness Development Team. The ADT returned to Lincoln, Aug. 28.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

ADT continued from page 1.

Lexi missed while her father was away was simple.

"My hugs," she said. "I'm going to run up and then I'm going to wrap my arms around him."

Staff Sgt. Justin Olson was there to welcome home his brother, Sgt. Jesse Olson. He said it was great to finally have his brother home.

"It means a great deal," said Olson. "I know they did a great job overseas and we're proud to have them back."

Olson, who has also deployed before, said he knew his brother missed the simple everyday things Americans often take for granted.

"It's the small things," said Olson. "Just seeing green and being able to go into your backyard and barbecue, I think that's what a guy misses the most... you don't know how much you take for granted until you're over there and you don't have it."

Olson said he and his brother were also looking forward to the Nebraska football season and planned to go to the first game of the season.

At last, two large busses arrived at the events center, driving through the parking lot that was lined with flag-holding members of the Patriot Riders.

Finally, the doors opened and the 49 members of the ADT quickly filed off the bus and into the waiting arms of loved ones. After several minutes of teary-eyed welcome homes, a ceremony was held to officially welcome the Soldiers home.

Gov. Dave Heineman thanked the Soldiers and their families for their sacrifices.

"To the family, to the friends and all the Nebraskans that are here today, thank you for showing up. This is awesome, it's incredible to show these Soldiers just how much we love you, how much we care about you and how much we support you," said Heineman. "America's proud of you. Nebraska is proud of you."

Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons, adjutant general, thanked the Soldiers for bringing their knowledge of agriculture to those who need it to survive.

"You all brought your hometown experience to bear in a country where the people so desperately need it," said Lyons. "Welcome back to Nebraska... job well done."

Comprised of Soldiers with agricultural backgrounds from across Ne-

braska, the members of the ADT left for Afghanistan in September 2008. While in Afghanistan the Soldiers, all of whom volunteered for the deployment, helped local farmers rebuild an agricultural system that had been destroyed by the 1979 Soviet invasion and subsequent Taliban reign. Once a profitable agricultural system, many Afghan farmers are now forced to produce poppies and opium for the drug trade.

The Nebraska National Guard Soldiers worked to change that.

"We did a lot of things that are going to have a lasting effect, but probably the biggest one was we restored some hope that there's a better life," said Col. Michael Johnson, commander of the ADT. "The ones we worked with gained some knowledge on how to put some food on the table and maybe make some money for their family."

Representing Sen. Ben Nelson, retired Lt. Gen. (Neb.) Roger Lempke praised the Soldiers on their completed mission.

"You've been involved in an innovative and very significant mission," said Lempke. "It's going to help develop a relationship with the people of the country. It's going to be so important as we move forward with trying to stabilize that portion of the world."

With their deployment now finished, the members of the ADT now begin rebuilding their own lives at home, just as they helped the Afghans. Getting reacquainted with family and assimilating back into their normal life, the Soldiers said they were happy to be home.

"The biggest thing is just the relief of being back in a place that's familiar, that's clean and that's safe," said 1st Lt. Brandon Burton.

Burton was welcomed home by his wife Brittany, son Jude, 2, and daughter Millie, now 1, who was only three days old when Burton left. Not surprisingly, Burton didn't miss any material things... just his family.

"My little girl," he said. "I (saw) her for three days after she was born, so I've missed teeth, walking, everything. So just to see her is just an amazing feeling."

"The happiest day I've had in a long time," he added.

To celebrate his homecoming, Burton said he only wanted to spend time with his family. "We're going to play in the sprinkler."



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Changing of the Guard: Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Burch (back to camera) prepares to hand the Nebraska National Guard colors to Maj. Gen. Tim Kadavy (left), beginning the formal change of command of the Nebraska National Guard from Kadavy to Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons (far right.) Gov. Dave Heineman (center) officiated over the change of command ceremony.



Photo by Master Sgt. Vern Moore

Up Front: Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons addresses the men and women of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard shortly after becoming the 32nd Nebraska adjutant general during an Aug. 23 change of command ceremony held at the National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb.

ADJUTANT GENERAL continued from page 1.

burden on those two groups," Lyons added.

Heineman said he expects nothing less.

"I'm very proud and very pleased that the Nebraska National Guard is one of the strongest and most capable, highly trained and highly professional military forces anywhere in our country," Heineman said. "This organization is well prepared to face the missions of the modern era."

Heineman said that's why he worked so hard to find the right leader for the Nebraska Military Department.

"I took my responsibilities of finding a successor to General Kadavy very, very seriously. And I am pleased that Brigadier General Judd Lyons is our new adjutant general," he added.

"He has 29 years of experience with the National Guard. He understands what our military families face as family members deploy for active duty. I have full faith and confidence in his ability to continue to move the Nebraska National Guard forward."

Along with the formal exchange of the Nebraska Military Department colors, the change of command ceremony was also a chance for the governor and the Nebraska National Guard to formally thank Kadavy for his service while also wishing him well as he assumes duties as the deputy director of the Army National Guard.

"As we welcome our state's 32nd adjutant general today, we also recognize the leadership of Major General Tim Kadavy," said Heineman, shortly after pinning the Legion of Merit medal on the departing general's uniform.

"He has been an outstanding leader for the Nebraska National Guard. It's clear that his talents have been recognized at the federal level and we wish him and his family the

best as he prepares for his new responsibility."

Lyons echoed those comments.

"General Kadavy, I want to wish you all the best as you embark on this next leg of your distinguished military career," Lyons said. "General Kadavy, I want to thank you for your leadership and guidance to me over the last two years."

"It's comforting to know that Nebraska will again be well represented at National Guard Bureau," he added.

Kadavy assumed the role of adjutant general in November 2007 when he succeeded retired Lt. Gen. (Neb.) Roger Lempke. During his tenure, the Nebraska National Army and Air National Guard continued to deploy units overseas to such places as Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Crete and Guam.

The Guard also supported such domestic emergency responses as last year's tornado in Kearney, wildfire support missions in California and the massive deployment of more than 1,000 Nebraska Soldiers and Airmen for the Hurricane Gustav and Ike responses in Louisiana and Texas.

Kadavy also oversaw the building of a fledgling bilateral relationship between the Nebraska National Guard and Afghanistan through U.S. Central Command.

Kadavy said his departure from Nebraska is bittersweet.

"I depart today as the 31st adjutant general of the state of Nebraska knowing your future is bright. And I leave you in the very capable hands of General Lyons," said Kadavy, who was accompanied at the ceremony by his wife Laurie, son Peter, and other members of his extended family.

Kadavy thanked Heineman for giving him the opportunity to serve as adjutant general.

"I cannot begin to repay you

for what I know has been the experience of my lifetime," said Kadavy.

"I only hope that during these past two years that I've measured up to your expectations. I've always appreciated your outstanding leadership and guidance, and I can personally attest that there is no one that I know of who cares more or works harder for Nebraska, the welfare of Nebraskans and that of her Citizen Soldiers and Airmen than you sir."

Kadavy also thanked the assembled Soldiers and Airmen and Emergency Management Agency employees, as well as those not present, for the hard work the organization accomplished during his tenure.

"Together with your families you serve Nebraska and our nation with professionalism and unbridled commitment and enthusiasm to get the job done for her citizens," he said.

"General Lyons, today in this change of command ceremony I turn over to you the most experienced and capable Nebraska National Guard ever seen," Kadavy said, before listing off the organization's many recent accomplishments.

"The future is full of hard work and opportunities, but I know you are up to the task."

Lyons said he looks forward to helping the organization make the most of those opportunities while tackling the challenges awaiting it.

"I look forward to the opportunity to lead the Nebraska Military Department," he said.

"I believe there is room to grow in our Nebraska National Guard. We have a great story to tell and we will be the service of choice for our young men and women who are good enough to be part of our team," said Lyons. "We will go out and tell that story."

"I can't wait to get to work with all of you together."



Photo by Master Sgt. Vern Moore

Taking the Oath: Governor Dave Heineman issues the adjutant general oath of office to Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons as Lyons' wife, Lt. Col. Amy Lyons, looks on.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Aerial Salute: Three Nebraska Army National Guard helicopters fly over the formation of 1,000 Nebraska Army and Air National Guardsmen in an aerial salute to the incoming and outgoing adjutants general during the Aug. 23 change of command ceremony.

McChrystal: Conventional strategy can't win in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON (AFPS) — The top U.S. military commander in Afghanistan ardently believes conventional military thinking and actions won't win the counterinsurgency war there.

"What I'm really telling people is, the greatest risk we can accept is to lose the support of the people here," Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal told "60 Minutes" news program correspondent David Martin during a profile segment that aired Sept. 27.



McChrystal

McChrystal was appointed in June as chief of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan. Martin traveled to Afghanistan to get McChrystal's thoughts about what it would take to win, or lose, the conflict in Afghanistan.

After arriving in Afghanistan as the top commander, McChrystal said conditions there were "probably a little worse" than he'd expected, noting he was taken aback by the spread of Taliban-committed violence into some of the north-

ern and western portions of the country.

The Taliban are the radical Islamic terrorists that once ran Afghanistan. U.S. and Afghan allies chased them from power during Operation Enduring Freedom in the fall and winter following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

Prior to their removal from power, the Taliban facilitated al-Qaida's stay in Afghanistan, allowing al-Qaida to run terrorist training camps and plot attacks.

Protecting the Afghan population from a resurgent Taliban and thus gaining their support is the key tenet of counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan, McChrystal told Martin.

"If the people are against us, we cannot be successful," McChrystal said. "If the people view us as occupiers and the enemy, we can't be successful and our casualties will go up dramatically."

McChrystal said he believes that just focusing on killing the Taliban — without consideration for accidental Afghan civilian casualties or the destruction of their homes — plays into the hands of the enemy.

"Since I've been here the last

two-and-a-half months, this civilian casualty issue is much more important than I'd even realized," McChrystal said. "It is literally how we lose the war, or in many ways, how we win it."

Consequently, McChrystal banned air strikes against residential areas, even if the enemy was firing from the buildings.

"We've got some things we absolutely have got to show them we'll do differently," McChrystal said.

Waging conventional war in Afghanistan by blasting away with all the firepower that's available is a non-starter, McChrystal said.

"There's a favorite saying, that to a man with a hammer everything looks like a nail," McChrystal said. "We can't operate that way; we can't walk with only a hammer in our hands."

McChrystal makes it a point not to wear body armor or carry a sidearm when he visits with Afghan governors or with everyday citizens in public. The governors and citizens don't wear body armor, McChrystal pointed out, noting it's important that he conveys a message of trust while demonstrating that he doesn't believe he is more valuable than his Afghan hosts are.

During his travels around the country, McChrystal routinely asks Afghans what U.S. and NATO forces can do to improve their lives — especially in regard to protecting them from Taliban insurgents.

But, things are going too slow in Afghanistan right now to suit McChrystal.

"We could do good things in Afghanistan for the next 100 years — and fail," McChrystal said, "because we're doing a lot of good things, (but) it just doesn't add up to success."

"We've got to think quicker," he said.

McChrystal also voiced frustration with a military bureaucracy that takes too long to provide him with needed staff personnel and other necessities.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates "talks in terms of 12 to 18 months to show a significant change, and then we eat up two or three months just on sort of getting the tools out of the toolbox," McChrystal said.

"That really hurts," he said.

An average organization pulls out a calendar when something needs to be done, McChrystal said, while a good organization looks at its watch. "And, we really have got to get

that way," McChrystal said.

McChrystal also has directed that convoy drivers cease driving wildly around on Afghanistan's streets and roads. Such aggressive driving is perceived by the Afghans "as arrogant" behavior, McChrystal said, and an indicator of "not caring about their right to use their roads."

Bad or dangerous driving constitutes one of many "bad habits we've got to deprogram" in Afghanistan, McChrystal said.

McChrystal recently submitted to the Pentagon and the White House his assessment of Afghan operations and another report recommending the required number of troops and resources he thinks will be required to win in Afghanistan.

"I take this extraordinarily seriously," McChrystal said. "I believe that what I am responsible to do is to give my best assessment."

McChrystal also said he'd have no qualms if he had to tell President Barack Obama that the mission in Afghanistan couldn't be accomplished.

"And, if I felt that way, the day I feel that way, the day I'm sure I feel that way, I'll tell him that," McChrystal said.

Guard chief cites new Nebraska-Afghanistan bilateral relationship, ADTs as example of 'smart power'

WASHINGTON (AFPS) — The National Guard is focused on helping the nation build partnership capacity worldwide, the chief of the National Guard Bureau told State Department officials Sept. 14.

Examples include the National Guard's Agribusiness Development Teams serving in Afghanistan and its State Partnership Program with 61 countries, Gen. Craig McKinley told an audience of State Department political advisors, known as PolAds.

"PolAds are on the front line of our efforts to develop a more cooperative and effective relationship between the State Department and the Department of Defense," said Andrew Shapiro, assistant secretary of state for political/military affairs.

"As advisors to our military services, combatant commanders and other senior military commanders, PolAds play a critical role in supporting our national security strategy."

PolAds are an example of "smart power," Shapiro said.

"Hard power" is a term to describe the application of military force. "Soft power" describes other instruments of national power: economic, diplomatic, information.

"Smart power" describes the idea of intelligently applying hard and soft power for maximum effect.

A day before the CNGB's State Department visit, Sen. Christopher "Kit" Bond told the National Guard Association of the United States conference in Nashville, Tenn.: "There is no entity in a better position to execute our nation's smart power than the National Guard."

"As chief of the National Guard Bureau, General McKinley has been a great proponent in supporting the whole-of-government approach to our national defense," Shapiro said.

Col. Martin Leppert, who is the coordinator the ADT program, joined McKinley to brief the PolAds on the work of the ADTs, which draw on the civilian-acquired skills as well as military training of Citizen Soldiers and

citizen Airmen.

"The uniqueness of the Agribusiness Development Teams is that (Citizen Soldiers and Citizen Airmen) bring their... skill sets from the United States as farmers, as agribusiness men and women to Afghanistan, where it is so needed after 40 years of constant turmoil and war," Leppert said.

The ADT program assists the combatant commander and involves partnerships with the State Department, Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Agency for International Development, other federal agencies, state land grant universities, state farm bureaus and other state and local agencies.

"We're working directly with you every day to synchronize our operations overseas," Leppert told the State Department PolAds. "It's been a very good relationship."

Because of the ADTs, Afghanistan has entered into a bilateral relationship with Nebraska, McKinley said.

"There is a large Afghan population in Nebraska," McKinley explained. "The University of Nebraska has a cultural center and that relationship has been enduring for decades."

Afghan medics recently received stateside training.

"We're on the verge... of codifying this relationship," McKinley said. "We solicit good ideas for... partnering wherever it makes sense."

Meanwhile, the National Guard State Partnership Program that emerged from the collapse of the former Eastern Bloc in the early 1990s now partners 61 countries with National Guard states.

"The (SPP) began with the collapse of the Berlin Wall," said John Finney, the NGB PolAd, emphasizing how the program supports combatant commanders and involves partnerships with the State Department and other agencies.

"The partnership works in three dimensions," he said, "military-to-military engagement, military-to-civil engagement and civil security cooperation."

EOD specialists live 'Wingman' concept daily during deployment

SOUTHWEST ASIA (AFNEWS) — The "Wingman" concept is about protection, born from early days of military flight when a group of aircraft flying together would constantly be looking out for each other.

The Air Force has adopted this concept as a way for Airmen to watch out for and protect one another; however, just as it is not a new concept for pilots, neither is it a new concept for explosive ordnance disposal service members.

"If we don't work as a team and help each other out we will not make it; we may not live to see the next job," said Tech Sgt. Wayson Leaverton, 379th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron EOD team chief, deployed from Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

It is essential for EOD service-members to be good team players. This is especially true if there is a need to diffuse a bomb or go outside the wire, said Master Sgt. Martin Coleman, 379th ECESE EOD flight chief, deployed from the Nebraska Air National Guard.

Sometimes being a good team player means they do not necessarily get to perform the duty they most enjoy; however, it is essential they perform the duty that most suits their strengths.

By knowing each other's strengths and weaknesses, EOD team members can fall into place like puzzle pieces.

"If one person is better in the bomb suit than another, then that person will be in the bomb suit," Leaverton said.

"During a previous deployment, we had a 20-year old that grew up driving trucks on mountain roads and could drive a (High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle) better than anyone, so he drove the truck. You have to put your ego in check sometimes and just do the job that is right for you."

Leaverton said knowing each other's

strengths and weaknesses, and using them to the team's advantage, creates such strong team synergy that sometimes they don't even need to talk to each other during a job; each team member knows their roles that well.

"In this job it is essential that we synch and work as a team, because one person cannot know and see everything," Coleman said.

Having reliable team members makes everything EOD does a lot safer, especially since they have one of the most dangerous jobs in the military.

"We are right on top of the danger, sometimes literally, so there is no room for error," Leaverton said. "If you can't count on the guys next to you, you are

dead. If I am in the bomb suit working on an improvised explosive device I don't have to worry about anything else going on around me because I know the person on the gun has my back."

This is the reason EOD works in three-man teams — to ensure there aren't any gaps in proficiency.

"You survive as a team," Coleman said.

Having to rely upon each other in life-or-death situations creates a special bond between all EOD members and

not just Air Force-wide, but service-wide; they are a very close-knit family.

"If something happens to anyone in the career field, we know about it the next day," Leaverton said. "And losing a member of EOD is like losing a family member."

Knowing they are saving other people's lives by putting themselves in harm's way and being able to clear their minds of all else so they can focus on the job are welcome challenges for EOD members.

"Having a job which offers constant challenges is the reason most service members join EOD," Coleman said.



U.S. Air Force photo

Tools of the Trade: (From left) Master Sgt. Martin Coleman and Senior Airman Jonathon Winter, 379th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron explosive ordnance disposal members, demonstrate their working tools to visitors, Sept. 18, in Southwest Asia. The 379th EOD team uses a variety of tools to support local aircraft and anti-terrorism force protection efforts.

92nd Troop Command greets new boss during August drill

By Pfc. Justin V. Zdan
Staff Writer

The Nebraska National Guard's 92nd Troop Command welcomed Col. Mike Navrkal as its new commander, Aug 22, when he assumed the organization's colors from newly selected adjutant general, Brig. Gen. Judd H. Lyons.

Navrkal said he looks forward to working with his new organization and its Soldiers.

"I've seen the 92nd units in action and they always did tremendous work," said Navrkal following the change of command ceremony, adding that he knows there are great Soldiers in the organization.

It's just a matter of giving them a task and they go do it, said Navrkal.

In assuming command of the 92nd Troop Command, Navrkal is now the senior leader for approximately 2,500 Army Guard Soldiers assigned to six battalions and several additional units located in 22 Nebraska communities.

Navrkal said he will bring with him the same philosophy toward training and preparedness that Lyons established during his assignment with the organization.

"I'm a big believer in incremental change," said Navrkal. "We strive to be better day after day."

It's just a matter of fine-tuning things and getting better, not anything drastic, said Navrkal. "That leverages the different types of experiences that we have in the ranks."

Navrkal was born July 20, 1960, in Nebraska City, Nebraska.

He graduated from Lourdes Central High School, Nebraska City, Neb., in 1979. He received a bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1984, a Masters of Science in Security Management from Bellevue University in 2006 and Master of Strategic Studies



Navrkal

Degree from the U.S. Army War College in 2009.

Navrkal began his military career in February 1979 when he enlisted in the Nebraska Army National Guard.

He entered the federal Officer Candidate School program in April 1981, graduated and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in June 1981.

Navrkal has served as a platoon leader, company executive officer and company commander. He has also served as a battalion personnel officer, assistant intelligence officer, assistant operations officer and assistant brigade operations officer.

Navrkal has served as the commander of the Scottsbluff-based 168th Quartermaster Petroleum Supply Battalion, and assistant director of Logistics for Headquarters, State Area Command.

Following an active duty assignment at the National Guard Bureau where he served as a logistics staff officer, Navrkal returned to Nebraska to deploy for Operation Iraqi Freedom 2006-08 as commander of the 867th Corps Support Battalion where he led over 1,500 Soldiers who provided logistical support in the Baghdad area of operations.

After the deployment Navrkal served as the Nebraska Joint Force Headquarters logistics officer and was later detailed as the state operations officer for JFHQ-Nebraska.

Navrkal and his wife Jeanie have been married 23 years and reside in Omaha, Nebraska.



Photo by Master Sgt. Alan Brown

Wilber student-artists Czech out Nebraska Air Guard stratotanker

Brandon Scusa (left) and Nick Hartwig look out from the cockpit of the KC-135R Stratotanker that will carry their winning nose art design. The two Wilber-Clatonia High School juniors won the annual Nebraska Air National Guard nose art competition that spotlights an individual Nebraska community each year with their submission "Czech Capitol, USA." The Nebraska Air Guard is spotlighting Wilber, Neb.



New Complex: The new \$11.9 million, 62,376 square-foot Greenleaf Armed Forces Readiness Center, as seen from a helicopter, is designed to be a much more energy efficient building than the armories it replaces. It now houses four Nebraska Army Guard and one U.S. Army Reserve units.

CENTER continued from page 1.

BRAC project identified several units in Nebraska that would benefit from combining the separate missions of the Army Reserve and Army National Guard into single facilities.

The Greenleaf AFRC is the second completed project of five planned in Nebraska.

The first AFRC was completed in Kearney on Nov. 21, 2008, and similar projects are underway in Beatrice, Columbus and McCook, said Zegers.

"This is the second BRAC project to be dedicated, strengthening the partner-

ship that the National Guard and the Army Reserve have," said Zegers.

"The Armed Forces Reserve Center is the next step in realizing the Nebraska National Guard's goal to build efficient, sustainable, world-class facilities for the Nebraska Soldiers and citizens," he added.

Many taxpayer benefits are already being realized through the use of combined Army Reserve and Army National Guard facilities, Zegers said.

"AFRCs are a benefit because they expend less state dollars during the long-term maintenance of the building," said



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

Ribbon Cutting: Distinguished guests including Gov. Dave Heineman, Maj. Gen. Timothy Kadavy and Hastings Mayor Vern Powers cut the ribbon to officially open the Greenleaf Armed Forces Reserve Center, Aug. 14.

Zegers. "(For) buildings that don't have the Army Reserve as part of new construction, the state pays 50 percent of the maintenance cost. This building, they pay 25 percent, so there's a definite benefit to Nebraska taxpayers."

The new facility was praised for its design and use of energy-saving construction techniques.

"You're seeing a much more functional and energy-efficient building than you've ever seen before," said Heineman.

"What this is all about is helping the men and women who are serving in our armed forces whom we are enormously proud of."

By building the new AFRC at the Greenleaf Training Site, it reaffirmed the dedication

the Army Guard and Army Reserve has to the community of Hastings, said Kadavy.

"The best Armed Forces Reserve Center in the nation sits right here in Hastings, Nebraska," said Kadavy. "We are so pleased to continue our relationship with the Hastings community and this just shows our continued support to that commitment."

Museum's fate unclear as state fair run ends

■ State Arsenal Museum gives visitors glimpse into past, present lives of Nebraska Guardsmen

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon
Assistant Editor

After 140 years of residing in the state capitol, the Nebraska State Fair will move to Grand Island beginning in 2010.

How that move will affect the success of the fair remains to be seen, but the fair may not be the only entity seeing a major change beginning next year.

The Nebraska National Guard's State Arsenal Museum, which sits within a stones-throw of the Bob Devaney Sports Center, will also likely see a decline in patrons.

Located at 17th and Court streets and normally only open by appointment, the museum has been open daily during the state fair since 1980. Operated by the Nebraska National Guard Historical Society, the museum is, by and large, the result of volunteer labor and donations. Admission to the museum is free.

The museum relies on annual and lifetime memberships for maintenance costs, and according to Sgt. 1st Class Michael Hayes, a supply systems analyst with Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, donations during the fair contribute greatly to the budget.

"We do offer the memberships, the annual and the lifetime, but this was our biggest donation moneymaker," said Hayes, who has been working at the museum for more than 15 years.

"So if this disappears, what's going to make up for it?"

The museum is meant to provide visitors a glimpse into the life of a Nebraska Guard Soldier or Airman from the inception of the Nebraska National Guard to present day while also fostering appreciation for what past Soldiers and Airmen did in service of their communities, state and nation.

"Give (visitors) an appreciation of what their forbearers did for them and some idea of what people that lived before them had to go through so they

understand it's a privilege living in this country," said Jim Murphy, a retired Nebraska National Guard master sergeant who has worked annually at the museum as part of a 19th Century cavalry reenactment unit for every state fair since the museum opened its doors.

Hayes said he hopes museum visitors take away an understanding of what it took to be a Soldier in the past and what it takes to be a Soldier now.

"I hope they get out of it just the sacrifices and perhaps just the time Soldiers spend in doing what they're doing...the difficulty of their job...that they appreciate just the toughness of being a Soldier."

Hayes said he didn't pay much attention to the history of the Nebraska National Guard until he started working at the museum. He now looks forward to giving tours and interacting with museum visitors.

He said he often learns as much from the guests as he teaches.

"I answer questions and listen... you get a lot of the retirees with their war stories," said Hayes. "We don't do so much talking as we do listening, that's the big thing."

More than 4,200 visitors walked through the museum during the 2009 State Fair. While there, they saw many sights and took advantage of plenty of activities.

Along with permanent static displays, historical military equipment spanning decades was displayed. Military members participated in fair parades. Sgt. Rock, a large inflated Army character similar to the Nebraska Cornhuskers' "Lil' Red," entertained kids. Kids won prizes at a football toss. Civil War re-enactors answered questions. Children had their face painted and had pictures taken with the equipment and Guardsmen.

The memories provided to museum visitors over the years are what may be missed the most once the fair is moved to



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

Fire in the Hole! Civil War reenactor Jim Murphy fires a Sharps Carbine .54 caliber rifle as part of his display at the State Arsenal Museum during the Nebraska State Fair. Murphy, a retired Nebraska National Guard master sergeant, has been providing his reenactment displays for the museum since it opened.



Future in Question: Located at 17th and Court Streets near the Devaney Sports Center, the State Arsenal Museum showcases the history of the Nebraska National Guard from its inception to the present. The museum's future is unclear as the Nebraska State Fair is moving to Grand Island beginning in 2010.

Grand Island say many of the patrons.

Brian Steckelberg of Shenandoah, Iowa, brought his 4-year-old daughter Olivia to the last state fair held in Lincoln to give her memories like he the ones he gained when his family took him to state fairs growing up.

The National Guard museum has a special place in those memories.

"As a boy growing up, this really stuck out in my mind - all the Army guys," said Steckelberg before pointing to several Army tanks on display. "I re-

member when I was a little kid climbing up on all these things."

"It's kind of an end of an era... I have a lot of good, fond memories," he said. "It's left an impression on me."

"My daughter... she's four now so I thought it would be something she'd remember when she gets older... I could see it leaving an impression."

According to Hayes, many of the visitors to the museum this year are repeats.

"We have kids that have been doing this since they were five or six years old...this is like a

memory of the state fair. This is something they've always done," said Hayes. "It's a good memory for them."

A member of the Nebraska National Guard for 37 years, retired Sgt. Maj. Steve Whitmore now works for the Nebraska Military Department as a defense travel advisor.

He is also a museum veteran, having worked at the facility for more than 20 years, the last five as the president of the Nebraska National Guard Historical Society.

Whitmore said he is sad to see the fair go to Grand Island because it gave the museum a chance to showcase what the Nebraska Guard has accomplished throughout the years.

"As far as the museum goes, I hate to see the fair go to Grand Island," said Whitmore. "I just hope the Nebraska National Guard can keep an operational museum for their past and present members to view the history of the Guard and also for civilians to see what the Nebraska National Guard has done for the state and country."

For more information about the State Arsenal Museum, to set up tours or to inquire about annual or lifetime memberships, call (402) 471-7124.

Civil support team sergeant awarded academic scholarship

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon
Assistant Editor

For some people its gardening, scrapbooking or movies. For others its golf or outdoor activities.

Almost everyone has a hobby or something they like to do in their spare time, but what happens when there is no spare time?

"I'm too busy for hobbies," said Staff Sgt. Chris Morehouse, a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high yield explosive noncommissioned officer with the 72nd Civil Support Team in Lincoln.

An eight-year veteran with the Nebraska National Guard, Morehouse worked full-time

with the CST for five years until he decided to pursue a career in nursing.

Now in his second semester at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, Morehouse spends most of his time in class, working and studying.

"I go to school during the day and work overnights," he said.

Class during the day and working part-time at the UNMC at night leaves the weekends for catching up on his studying or Guard drill. What little extra time the Omaha native has is spent with his wife of three years, Jenny, and their 20-month-old son Titus.

During his Guard drill weekends Morehead still works with the 72nd CST in Lincoln. The CST is a 22-person team that helps local authorities prepare for and respond to incidents involving hazardous materials.

Morehead said the CST basically has two jobs: a standby mission and an after incident mission.

During a standby mission the CST assists local authorities by going to high profile events such as the College World Series, Governor's Ball or Olympic Swim Trials and searching for potential terror targets and advising authorities on precautions they can make to minimize risks.

During an after incident mission, the CST accompanies first responders to the scene of an incident and works to identify any harmful contamination and assist in its removal.

As an NCO, Morehouse understands why sergeants are so important to the success of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard.

"(NCOs) are traditionally the ones that go out and accomplish whatever mission is required,"

said Morehouse. "We are there to not only train and make sure we're up to standards, but our Soldiers and the civilians we work for also have a high standard of training and equipment in order to get the mission done."

Morehouse recently drew upon his experience and leadership when he applied for a scholarship from the Enlisted Association of the National Guard. Cadets at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State College, more commonly known as Virginia Tech, chose Morehouse as one of nine applicants to be awarded the \$2,000 Command Sgt. Maj. Virgil R. William EANGUS scholarship.

According to a letter from the EANGUS, Morehouse was chosen for the scholarship based on his academic background and experiences. Morehouse said the word "leadership" was highlighted on his application

and played a large part in his selection.

He was awarded the scholarship during a banquet in Rochester, Minn. Aug. 12.

Morehouse said he felt honored to be awarded a scholarship from an organization that has already done so much for Soldiers, not to mention the importance the financial help will play for him and his family during his schooling.

"Our budget was actually \$2,000 short this school semester, so that actually filled our gap," he said. "Not only was it an honor, it was a lifesaver for my wife and son."

With new financial help Morehouse will continue pursuing his nursing schooling in addition to serving with the CST as a part-time Guardsmen during weekend drills.

As for finding time for future hobbies? Only time will tell.



Morehouse

On the Edge

Soldier overcomes fear to make history during Air Assault School

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon
Assistant Editor

Savannah Allen was made for the Army. She just didn't know it until she got to college.

Growing up participating in rodeos in Grand Island, Allen learned to be tough and how to take on challenges. Allen also played several sports including softball, cross country and soccer, which gave her the desire to achieve and excel.

When she enrolled at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the 22-year-old continued playing soccer for the Cornhuskers, but eventually the money ran out and she had to make a choice.

"I think I was made for the Army," said Allen. "I just didn't want to do it at the time."

Without even realizing it, Allen's family and coaches at UNL had prepared her to be a Soldier and have success in the Army.

"My coach was like a drill sergeant," said Allen. "My mom is like a drill sergeant."

Allen followed in the footsteps of two older siblings who had served in the Army and Air Force when she enlisted into the Nebraska Army National Guard to be a combat medic in the Guard's 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade in Lincoln. Allen headed to basic training in January 2009 and quickly found out that not only could she succeed in the Army, she really enjoyed it.

"The more I did it, the more I liked it," she said. "I was doing all kinds of cool stuff."

Prior to heading to basic training Allen said her recruiter asked her if she had any interest in attending Airborne or Air Assault school. With an admitted fear of heights, her answer was easy.

"Why would I jump out of an airplane or rappel out of a helicopter? Are you crazy?" Allen recalled saying.

However, once she got to basic training and advanced individual training, Allen said she began speaking with other Soldiers about the opportunity to receive additional training. Her tune soon began to change and she started looking into the possibility of attending Air Assault School, an intense 11-day course that focuses on combat assault operations involving Army rotary-wing aircraft.

Students at AAS are tested mentally and physically beginning with a "Zero Day" obstacle course and two-mile run in boots, which serves as an entrance exam.

If students make it past Zero Day they then continue through different phases of instruction that focus on, among other things, becoming proficient in aircraft familiarization, preparing helicopter sling loads and rappelling from fixed structures and finally a hovering helicopter.

If students make it through all phases of the course, their final exam is a 12-mile road march that must be completed within three hours while carrying a 30-pound rucksack and weapon. Those that complete the road march graduate

from the course and can wear the Air Assault Badge.

"It just sounded cool," said Allen, now a Nebraska Army National Guard private first class.

"I was always scared to death of heights. I wanted to do it because it was more of a challenge. How many people can say they've rappelled out of a helicopter?"

From speaking to other Soldiers, Allen said she learned that AAS would be very physically demanding. A good score on her Army Physical Fitness Test, she found out, would help her chances of first, getting into

AAS, and second, completing the physically demanding course.

With 63 push-ups in two minutes, 97 sit-ups in two minutes and a two-mile run in 13 minutes 45 seconds, Allen scored a 358, well in excess of the Army's 300 maximum score. Her exceptional score on the APFT positioned her well to request a spot in AAS.

When Allen returned to the 67th BfSB after her initial training, she immediately began asking about AAS slots. Fortunately, recruiters had slots available.

Allen said because she was new to the unit, 67th BfSB leaders were wary of sending her to AAS, but her APFT scores showed she was dedicated to success. Once the slot was hers, her preparation began in earnest.

Sgt. 1st Class Jessie Matlock, readiness noncommissioned officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 67th BfSB, said he helped Allen prepare for the obstacles he felt she might have trouble with.

"Everything that I told her that was



Courtesy Photos

Moving Out: Pfc. Savannah Allen hustles during Air Assault School. Allen overcame her fear of heights to graduate from the school that teaches rappelling from fixed structures and hovering aircraft.



Whatever You Do, Don't Look Down: Pfc. Savannah Allen rappels from a tower during Air Assault School at Fort Benning, Ga. Allen became the first known Nebraska Army National Guard woman to complete the intense 11-day course.

going to be an issue or an obstacle that I saw for her, she went and made sure that she was going to be able to (overcome them)," said Matlock.

As if the stress of preparing for the AAS wasn't difficult enough, Matlock said Allen soon found out that if she was successful she would become the first known female from the Nebraska National Army Guard to complete the training.

Allen said she was a little nervous about being the first, but used it as motivation during the course. Still, she doesn't put much stock in the feat.

"It doesn't make a huge difference to me to be the first female," she said. "I'm just like that in general. When somebody tells me this is a really tough course, regardless if I'm a female or not, I'm kind of like 'Okay, I'll do it.'"

Finally Allen put all of her physical and mental preparation to the test when she began the training July 27. She graduated Aug. 7. Along with graduating from the course, Allen easily overcame her fear of heights.

"The rappel phase was the best," she said. "The helicopter was the best part. We only did it once, but that was actually one of the situations where I thought for sure I would freak out – freeze. But

it was one of those 'That's what you're supposed to do and you do it.'"

By completing AAS Allen showed she has the necessary leadership and warrior skills to be successful in the Army Guard, said Matlock.

"It shows us that we've got somebody that is high-speed, that's going to want to do the job, that is here for a reason – because they want to," said Matlock. "They help set the bar for the rest of the Soldiers."

"There are other people who are not in that good of shape, but it gives them a little bit of a drive to say, 'Hey, I want to be able to do that, too.'"

Matlock said it's quite an honor for Allen to be the first female from the Nebraska Army National Guard to complete AAS, but he understands her gender doesn't define her.

"I have a daughter, so in that sense it really kind of strikes home when I see a female achieve goals like that. But on the other hand, a Soldier is a Soldier," said Matlock.

With her initial training and AAS behind her, Allen is now settling into her role as a traditional Guardsman and continuing her work at UNL toward her Nutritional Science degree and Spanish minor.

Nebraska Airman keeps 'cooler heads' prevailing during deployment

SOUTHWEST ASIA (AF-NEWS) — With temperatures reaching more than 115 degrees during summer months here, 386th Civil Engineer Squadron Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning members work tirelessly to keep deployed members cool.

Air conditioning units here outnumber HVAC members 2,000 to 12. Add in the refrigeration and freezer units preserving food, along with the task of keeping water cool, and HVAC members find their hands full.

"We spend long hours every day fixing air conditioning units," said Tech. Sgt. Scott

Gurley, HVAC technician.

"In this kind of environment, there's no way we could keep all the units running smoothly all the time. Our units will work great for a few days and we'll get hit with a sandstorm and they'll just stop working."

Spraying water through the filter of an AC unit that has frozen solid, Gurley, an Air National Guard member deployed from the 155th Air Refueling Wing in Lincoln, Neb., explained the most common problem HVAC members face.

"People need to clean out their filters on their AC units," he said.

"We'll come out and get your air working, but a lot of the time

a broken unit could have been avoided."

HVAC members receive between 15 and 20 calls per day for work orders on AC units.

"If you call us, we do our best to get to you the same day," said Master Sgt. Roland Kauwe, HVAC supervisor deployed from the 154th Civil Engineering Squadron, Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii.

"We have certain critical facilities that take precedence, but our goal is to make sure everyone is taken care of."

Since his arrival here in late June, Kauwe and the HVAC shop has processed more than 500 job orders. One work order

in particular would have been very costly had the HVAC shop not responded and fixed the problem immediately.

Of the 2,000 systems the HVAC shop monitors, there are 21 units that are used to freeze and store food.

When the HVAC system went out one day, more than \$300,000 worth of food was on the line.

"Our Airmen stepped up to the challenge and got the system back online before any of the goods perished," said Tech. Sgt. Michael Diaz, a HVAC technician deployed from the 152nd Airlift Wing, Reno, Nev.

HVAC members truly be-

lieve the idiom, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," when it comes to preventative maintenance. Their re-occurring work program was installed so the main facilities on base receive periodic check-ups to make sure systems were running at full speed.

"We take the time to clean out any coils or filters that may be getting dirty," said Kauwe. "The more we can do, the better everyone else's life is."

When temperatures outside start rising and 386th AEW members start getting hot under the collar, HVAC members are there to ensure "cooler" heads prevail.



Training Time: Nebraska Air National Guard firefighters gather around two overturned vehicles for a final class on vehicle extraction procedures before moving on to the hands-on portion of the training, Aug. 1.



Working it Out: Two Nebraska Air National Guard firefighters practice the skills they need to open a door of an overturned vehicle.



Photos by Master Sgt. Vern Moore

Working Together: A team of Nebraska Air National Guard firefighters work together to extract an injured passenger from an overturned car, Aug. 1, at the National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb.

Firefighters practice life-saving skills

By Master Sgt. Vern Moore
Photojournalist

The ability to respond quickly, precisely and accurately to accidents is the key to saving lives.

In August members of the 155th Civil Engineering Squadron's base firefighting team worked to gain knowledge and hone skills to save lives from wrecked automobiles when they conducted a vehicle extraction exercise at the Nebraska National Guard base fire station.

According to Scott Loos, chief firefighter, the exercise is an annual requirement for the firefighters and rescue workers.

"We do this annually where we bring the cars out and take each shift, the civilian and Guard firefighters, and give them hands-on-training," said Loos about the Aug. 1 training.

The exercise began with classroom training, which included a PowerPoint presentation that covered vehicle con-

■Nebraska Air National Guard firefighting unit conducts annual vehicle extraction exercise to hone ability to rescue people trapped in cars

struction and wiring, airbag locations and how they deploy, tool familiarization and how they work, new hybrid vehicle construction as well as safety procedures.

According to the firefighters, vehicle extraction is different from other aspects of firefighting. For example, there may not be a fire involved, so the focus is on safely extracting an injured patient from a wrecked automobile. Specialized tools for handling this type of scenario, such as hydraulic cutters and spreaders, are different than some of the typical tools used, Loos said.

"This training keeps your skills up so if you are faced with these types of situations, in the Area of Responsibility (AOR) or civilian side, that you're

familiar with the tools and techniques needed for it," said Staff Sgt. David Parker, firefighter.

The classroom portion completed, the Air Guard firefighters then ventured outdoors for the hands-on segment.

Outside of the fire station two salvaged vehicles, acquired from an auto recycling company, were placed in a simulated accident configuration, with one vehicle overturned and partially overlapping the other.

According to Loos, when firefighters arrive on the scene of an accident, they must first perform a scene size-up. A scene size-up encompasses the number of vehicles, the number and condition of the patients, and the positioning of the vehicles. Within the scene size-up

the firefighters decide upon the best techniques to use for stabilizing the vehicle(s) and patient(s) as well as which tools and extrication procedures to use.

Stabilizing the vehicle(s) is important so the automobile does not shift or move during the extrication, causing further damage to the patients or firefighters. Straps and cribbing (wood or plastic blocks and wedges) are used to secure the cars before using the hydraulic cutters and spreaders to gain access to the patients.

While some firefighters were responsible for stabilizing the automobiles, others prepared the extrication tools and first aid items.

At the end of the training Staff Sgt. Jason Loch, firefighter, summed up the experience.

"This is valuable training because it is nice to go out and implement what (we) have learned from hours of training. It gives the younger firefighters a chance to become more comfortable with their tools and develop their skills."

Norfolk Soldiers help out aspiring reporters

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon
Assistant Editor

Six members of Norfolk's 189th Transportation Company, Nebraska Army National Guard, helped six journalism students from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a class project, Oct. 2, when they provided interviews for stories written in conjunction with the *Norfolk Daily News*.

The students were assigned to interview the Soldiers and then write an article for submission to the *Norfolk Daily News* editors. The students focused on learning interviewing skills for their Beginning Reporting class and were happy the Guard members were onboard to help them out.

"You can't learn how to interview someone until you actually do it," said Erin Starkebaum, a sophomore News Editorial major. "The most helpful thing for me, learning how to interview, is actually going out and doing it. So this has been a huge help."

"It's another chance to interview

somebody and another chance to write a story," said Brendan Carl, a senior News Editorial major. "Experience right now is pretty much priceless."

The 189th Trans. Co. was deployed to Iraq 2005-06, so many of the students wanted to focus their stories on different aspects of the affect that the deployment had on the Soldiers.

The Soldiers were more than happy to give the students their firsthand knowledge.

"I think it's a good deal because they are actually hearing it from people who were over there," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jim Hurley, a maintenance officer. "They are getting first hand knowledge rather than maybe something they would see on TV."

"It's always good when a guy gets to talk about his experiences over in Iraq and get it out there to people that don't know what it's like over there," said Staff Sgt. Josh Wessel, a training noncommissioned officer.

The students, many of whom had no experience with military members, also

got the chance to learn more about the Soldiers and the military.

"It gives them an opportunity to do something that maybe a lot of people haven't gotten the chance to do and actually talk to someone that is in this business," said Hurley.

"I honestly think that they realized we're just another human being; we're somebody just like them except we wear the camouflage uniform," said Wessel. "We're Nebraskans helping Nebraskans."

With their interviews completed, the journalism students then told the story of the Soldier they interviewed. They realize it's an important task.

"I feel privileged," said Carl. "I think the people that read our articles will get to see a side of the Soldiers that I think in other areas...we wouldn't be able to talk about. I think it's good for the Soldiers as well to share."

"It makes me feel good that I know people will know his side of the story," said Starkebaum. "People probably wouldn't get to know that otherwise."



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

Building Interviewing Skills: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Journalism student Erin Starkebaum interviews Staff Sgt. Josh Wessel, a training sergeant with the 189th Transportation Company in Norfolk, Neb., Oct. 2. Six Norfolk Soldiers talked to the aspiring reporters for a project in conjunction with the *Norfolk Daily News*.

Guard engineers take next step as unit

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

When Capt. Cory Hinrich began preparing this year's annual training plan for the 623rd Engineer Company (Vertical Construction), he wanted to put his Army Guardsmen to the test... to help them expand their horizons as engineers, as Soldiers, as a unit.

After spending three weeks in June conducting a variety of exercises at Fort Riley, Kan., and the Mead (Neb.) Training Site in a variety of weather conditions ranging from bone-chilling rainy nights to hot, muggy days of 110-plus degree heat indexes, it's safe to say mission accomplished.

"I think I'll know that I got it right if these Soldiers get into theater and they say, 'This is a lot better than what they put us through in 2009,'" said Hinrich, June 23, as the Wahoo and Hastings-based engineer unit completed the last couple days of its June 6-26 annual training.

"They needed what I guess you would call a point of perspective of being able to say 'I can remember a time when I working under these conditions, living under these conditions, and I still found a way to do my best,'" he added.

"You would be hard-pressed to find somebody who is not busy, who is not working, who is not actively engaged."

For the 95 people participating in this year's exercise, the first mission was to conduct a convoy to Fort Riley.

There, the 623rd Eng. Soldiers, who were augmented by additional Guardsmen from the unit's battalion headquarters and the 181st and 317th Engineer Detachments (Fire Fighting) from Norfolk, Neb., conducted weapons qualifications with their M-16 rifles and M-9 pistols, and also participated in a number of exercises designed to help the newly formed unit develop teamwork and camaraderie.

The teamwork exercises included demolitions and crew-served weapons familiarization training as well as tackling the post's leadership reaction course and the ever-challenging confidence course.

Hinrichs said it was all

designed to help the unit's individual squads begin to work more closely together in areas outside of their normal engineering duties.

"What we wanted to do was start the transition from straight construction and start integrating (Army Warrior Training) tasks against them so that people could learn how to work under more stressful conditions, more austere conditions and still learn what their limitations are," he said, adding: "The junior (noncommissioned officers) need an opportunity to step up and manage their squads, not only in construction crews, but as leaders of patrols, leaders of Soldiers."

1st Lt. Chris Pelchat, 623rd Eng. Co. executive officer who also serves as the company's construction officer, said the training at Fort Riley definitely set the stage for the rest of the annual training.

"You see platoons learning more about one another... squads learning more about each other," said Pelchat, who works as a project manager at Cooper Nuclear Station in civilian life. "You see them bonding together."

After a week of training in Kansas, the unit convoyed back to Wahoo where the Soldiers were released to go home and do laundry.

The next day it was back to work, this time at the nearby Mead Training Site. Initially, said Hinrichs, the unit was supposed to pull into an area on a hill where the engineers had been tasked to pour concrete pads and set up guard towers for a new tactical training base (TTB) being constructed there.

However, heavy rains had turned the construction site into



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Measuring Progress: Pfc. Rene Olivares, a carpentry masonry specialist from South Sioux City, Neb., measures a wooden form while conducting annual training with the 623rd Engineer Company (Vertical Construction) at the Mead Training Site, June 23. The Wahoo and Hastings, Neb., unit accomplished a multitude of tasks during this year's training exercise.

a muddy, soupy mess.

No problem, Hinrich said. Instead the unit moved into a grassy area near some concrete buildings that the company could use for shelter if Nebraska's notoriously fickle spring-time weather turned nasty. There they essentially built a company operations area from scratch.

Hinrich said over the next two weeks the unit's squads were put into a training schedule designed to give them opportunities to work as engineers while also training as Soldiers.

"We put them in a matrix where they build for two days and then they fight for one day," he said. "So, if they're not up here (at the TTB) building, they're down there working on AWT tasks."

"We've got a host of scenarios

that we came up with," he added.

For example, the Soldiers practiced both mounted and dismounted patrols. They also learned how to operate in a simulated combat environment where enemy activity could happen at any moment, day or night.

"Our goal was to have the Soldiers establish a battle rhythm; to come out here with nothing on the ground," said 1st Sgt. Mark Paolini, unit first sergeant. "They had an idea of what the mission was going to be, but not the enemy activity or the terrorist threats."

The hope, he added, was to find out how the individual squads and platoons would react in an environment the young Soldiers were completely unfamiliar with.

"You need to make it as realistic as possible," he said. "The environment cooperated with us while we were out here, so we didn't have to worry about that. But, everything from chow rotation to pulling security... this is the

first time that a lot of them have been out in a field environment for 21 days."

Hinrichs said the unit's platoon leaders and two Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets acted as observer-controllers during the AWT tasks. Wearing action cameras, the leaders were then able to bring the squads back after they'd completed their mission and go over the exercise in much the same way as coaches review game and practice tapes with their teams.

"They can look at the tape and ask open-ended questions, like 'What happened here?'" Hinrichs said, adding the Soldiers were then able to get immediate feedback and additional training on how they reacted during the variety of situations.

Paolini said he noticed a definite change in the Soldiers during the course of the three-week exercise.

"They're a lot more motivated. They're starting to think about 'Okay, we've got a mission coming up, how do I prepare for that mission? Do I need to check my (load bearing vest?) Do I need to put on clean socks? If I don't know what's going on, I need to ask my squad leader. If the squad leader doesn't know, he'll ask the platoon sergeant,'" said Paolini. "So it's gets the thinking process going."

Another aspect of the training exercise was that it gave the Soldiers a chance to better understand what it's like to be deployed overseas with someone for year, said Pelchat.

"Under these conditions of getting rained on, being cold, being hot, you can see how they're starting to watch over each other a lot better," he said. "You'll see tempers flare and people get mad, and you have to tell them, 'Hey, look... we've been here three weeks. You're going to be together for a year. You're going to have to learn to work through your differences.' And they've been able to do that."

"I don't think you could do that without actually going through something like this," Pelchat added.

According to the unit's younger Soldiers, this year's annual training lived up to expectations.

"It's good... it's a little hot now," said Pfc. Rene Olivares, a carpentry masonry specialist from South Sioux City, Neb., while he and a team of engineers worked to build wooden forms for a concrete pad on the TTB. "I'm getting a lot of good hands-on training in my (Military Occupational Specialty)... a lot more than I've gotten this whole year."

Olivares, a 2007 graduate of South City High School who hopes to pursue a construction degree at Iowa State University in the near future, said he also enjoyed getting to learn more fieldcraft types of skills.

"It's really good to be doing both of the same things that we will be doing when we deploy," he said.

"It's good to be doing this stuff, to get some of this training, so we'll know what to expect."

Military policemen gain valuable experience while patrolling Fort Riley

By Mark Roland

Unit Public Affairs Representative

As preparations begin for a deployment to Iraq, 40 members of the 192nd Military Police Detachment (Law and Order) gained valuable experience patrolling with the law enforcement officers on Fort Riley, Kan., during their June annual training period.

While at Fort Riley, June 7-12, the Nebraska Soldiers were separated into shifts to have the opportunity to engage in all aspects of the officers' day.

"There was a lot of work," said Staff Sgt. Casey Sorensen, military police investigator and day shift supervisor. "At 0600 we had our brief and by 0700 we were on the road."

On drill weekends the Nebraska Army Guard detachment is typically limited to scenario training exercises, but this was different.

This annual training period was a good opportunity to gain real-life experience from full-time law enforcement officers.

"They really looked at it as an op-

portunity to train us," said Staff Sgt. David Fink, military police investigation section supervisor and detachment training noncommissioned officer.

"They knew that we were getting ready to (mobilize) and, especially in the investigations, they were excellent with us. They wanted to show us everything and they responded to all our questions."

For example, Sorensen worked with the full-time supervisor who had both military and civilian law enforcement experience.

Sorensen was given helpful training on how to respond to diverse circumstances. Each day the eight officers on Sorensen's shift were assigned to specific patrol districts on the base.

"They have little sections that they patrol, not everyone patrols the whole base. They switched every other day. We tried to get them all around the base. There were some boring spots, but there were some spots that had a lot of action."

"As shift supervisor I would watch everyone. If there was a traffic stop and they needed assistance, I would go and assist them, and help them with what

they needed to do ticket-wise, help them with the legal ways of doing things."

The officers responded to alarms, stray animals, domestic issues and robberies. While responding to a domestic incident, Sorensen learned how to best secure a crime scene and document personnel as they entered and left the area.

"It was a pretty busy day," Sorensen said. "Usually on the day shifts there were more traffic stops. On the night shifts it was more DUIs and stuff like that. By the end of the time we were there, a lot of guys knew what to do, or were getting the hang of it. They could write tickets on their own and pretty much take over on their own."

Fink worked with investigators and civilian detectives. He said that assignment kept him very busy responding to calls.

"There was a lot more than you'd think there would be on an active duty post," Fink said. "A lot of youth-type juvenile activity, a lot of domestics."

Working with the patrols, the investigators performed more in-depth work for the department.

"The patrols do the initial interviews,"

Fink explained, "and the investigators pick up from there. We'd respond to the call and direct what we need from the patrols, take that information and build a case and do any kind of follow up."

"They had a group of kids that were doing vandalism, tagging and doing spray paint, in a rather large area. They had done an alleged attack on a bike trail there; they thought it was this group of kids that attacked another kid that did not want to join the group. That was the big case that was going on and they let us help them out quite a bit," he said.

"We questioned a couple of the kids and we had to document all this graffiti that was going on and get that put together to present to the post commander," Fink added.

The unit finished its annual training at Fort Riley by training on the virtual convoy simulator, the call for fire trainer and clearing rooms in the military operations in urban terrain (MOUT) site.

"This AT was a real big help for everybody getting ready to deploy," Sorensen said.

"Everything that happened on Riley happens over there."

Sniper Fire: A paintball fired by an “insurgent” splatters on the windshield of a Humvee during annual training at the Greenleaf Training Site in Hastings. Soldiers used paintball guns to add realism to training scenarios.



Truck units use field classroom to build team, warrior skills

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon
Assistant Editor

When it comes to serving in a combat zone, the training Soldiers receive prior to ever stepping foot overseas is often the most crucial link between success and catastrophic failure.

For two weeks this past August, the leaders of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 734th Transportation Battalion worked to provide their Soldiers with a variety of real-world experiences when they conducted annual training Aug. 1-15 at the Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb.

“We’re building confidence,” said Lt. Col. Gerald Meyer, battalion commander. “All of our younger Soldiers are talking about how they can make things better and that’s really what we’re looking for.”

During the AT, members of the 734th Trans. Bn. performed extensive weapons training and qualifications, worked on troop leading procedures and performed classroom training on the planning of a convoy mission.

Finally, the Soldiers put all of their skills to the test during an Army Warrior Task lane exercise where they had to conduct a convoy through the training site, which had been transformed to simulate many of the hazards and obstacles encountered daily in places like Iraq and Afghanistan including improvised explosive devices, sniper fire and small-arms fire.

Throughout the training that led up to the convoy lane, the instruction was geared toward

instilling confidence while also fostering newly-learned leadership skills within the Soldiers.

“We brought them together, we taught them about troop leading procedures...then we gave them a scenario right away to start developing how they would go through this lane,” said Meyer. “It’s a leadership thing because they’ve got to be thinking on their feet.”

Meyer said he wanted to provide his junior enlisted Soldiers with experiences that are usually reserved for more tenured noncommissioned officers.

“We moved the junior enlisted up to assume the higher ranking positions to get them, that experience of being a leader on a convoy or escort mission,” he said. “The senior NCOs are there to mentor. They went through the process with them giving them advice and kind of helping them along, but when it came time to execute, it was a specialist that was in charge of it – that was the convoy commander.”

During one particular convoy Spc. Travis Smith, a motor transport operator from Columbus’ 1075th Transportation Company, was assigned to be his convoy’s commander. Although Smith had spent two year-long deployments in Iraq, he’s never had this level of responsibility.

“This is the first time I’ve ever had to take charge,” said Smith. “It was definitely more than what I expected. I’m just an E-4; usually overseas it’s an E-5 or E-6 or above that are convoy commanders. To me it was a really good learning experience.”

According to Meyer, putting



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

Providing Cover: A paint-splattered Soldier with the 734th Transportation Battalion, Nebraska Army National Guard, provides cover with a paintball gun for fellow Soldiers participating in Army Warrior Task lane training during the 734th’s annual training at the Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb.



Smoke House: Soldiers from the 734th Transportation Battalion wait for smoke to clear from a structure at the Military Operations on Urban Terrain training site at the Greenleaf Training Site during the 734th’s annual training. Soldiers acting as insurgents used the building to ambush the Guardsmen trying to clear the area.

lower enlisted Soldiers in a position generally reserved for higher ranking sergeants is a relatively new concept.

“Twenty years ago that would have been so different,” he said. “That would have been the platoon leader honchoing it with not a lot of input from

junior enlisted.”

The Army culture has changed because junior enlisted Soldiers have so much experience from deployments, so their opinions and ideas are welcomed – even solicited – by NCOs and unit commanders, Meyer said.

It’s all about making a more effective team, he said.

“We can take the experience that we’ve got, we can take all the lessons learned, the latest and greatest information, and we can apply it to what they would have really saw over there,” said Meyer.

Smith, with his two deployments to Iraq, is able to compare this AT with his experiences overseas. He said he definitely understands the importance.

“The best training we can do state-side is stuff like this,” said Smith. “This is what happens in Iraq. This is a real-life scenario. It’s important because when you get on the battlefield you need to know how to operate your equipment.”

Despite long grueling days on the firing range, in the classroom and in Humvees during lane training, the Soldiers retained a good attitude toward their training and truly wanted to learn from it, said Smith.

“It’s been great training so far,” said Smith. “I just get a kick out of it. I have fun every time I’m in uniform. I think everybody is having a good time.”

Exercise gives transportation Soldiers opportunity for realistic experiences

By Pvt. Michelle Berry
Special for the *Prairie Soldier*

When the dog days of summer come around, National Guard Soldiers know what time it is. It’s time to brush up on mission training, a time to learn new tactics and a time to reflect on past deployments.

For members of the 734th Transportation Battalion, this year’s Aug. 1-15 annual training at the Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb., was no different than the rest.

Annual training is any two-week period during the fiscal year when National Guard Soldiers get their most intensive training.

For this year’s annual training, around 300 Soldiers passed through the gates of the Greenleaf Training Site for a wide variety of training exercises including work with eight different weapons systems as well practice loading litter patients

onto UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters.

The 734th Soldiers also supported this year’s Adjutant General’s Marksmanship Sustainment Exercise, held Aug. 7-9 at the Greenleaf Training Site.

Even though the heat was stifling, it gave the Soldiers an even more lifelike experience to prepare them for future deployments.

“The high humidity helped to balance out the lower temperatures this year at Greenleaf,” said Sgt. Cory Walcott, a member of the Nebraska Medical Detachment that supported this year’s annual training. “We only had one heat casualty and that Soldier returned to training the next day. Overall, this year wasn’t that bad.”

The 734th Trans. Bn. was in charge of conducting all training and making sure Soldiers completed the missions. The week started off with the 1075th



Photo by Pvt. Michelle Berry

Realistic Training: A team of 734th Transportation Battalion Soldiers practice loading wounded Soldiers onto a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during annual training at the Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb.

Transportation Company from York and Columbus completing the various exercises.

First, the Soldiers worked with their M-16 rifles, completing weapons qualification that started with the zero range and then advanced over to the known distance range where Soldiers shot at paper targets located 100, 200 and 300 meters away. The final stage of the qualification

exercise was the modified record fire range with more than 95 percent of the 1075th Tran. Co. Soldiers hitting at least 24-of-40 pop-up targets.

Following the weapons qualification, the Soldiers spent six days training on the training site’s Humvee rollover simulator, conducting convoy lane exercises, and working with UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crews to load patients via litters.

After the first week of training was completed, the 1075th Trans. Co. convoyed to Camp Guernsey, Wyo., to complete their annual training. That’s when preparations for the Adjutant General’s Marksmanship Sustainment Exercise began.

This year’s matches saw around 250 Soldiers and Airmen from across the state competing in a variety of shooting exercises.

Following the competition,

it was time for the last cycle of Soldiers to travel to Hastings.

On Aug. 9 around 200 Soldiers representing the 168th Quartermaster Petroleum Supply Battalion arrived to conduct training under the watchful eyes of the 734th Trans. Bn. Throughout the next week they conducted training similar to that experienced by the 1075th Trans. Co. a week earlier.

“It was a great opportunity for me to develop my teaching skills and leadership styles,” said Staff Sgt. Matt Sims, 734th Trans. Bn. personnel sergeant, “as well as having a chance to experience other areas that are outside my everyday job.”

Next year the 734th Tran. Bn. will travel to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., for its annual training.

(Editor’s Note: Pvt. Michelle Berry is a human resources specialist for the 734th Transportation Battalion. She wrote the story as a special assignment during her annual training this year.)

Let's Do This: A Bosslift participant gives the thumbs-up sign shortly before participating in a live fire operation, during which the Nebraska employers and civic leaders had the opportunity to actually fire live weapons under the supervision of Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers.



Photo by Sgt. Michael Coleman

Bosses glimpse into Guard Soldiers' lives

By Capt. Andrew Nelson
Staff Writer

Sergeant Randy Wallerich of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 1057th Transportation Company used to take a lot of ribbing from his co-workers at his civilian job about being gone for military duty.

Wallerich is a carrier with the Scottsbluff Post Office, and to be fair to his co-workers, one of them – a man named Jim Benitez – would have to work his route when he was gone. It was a particular burden when Wallerich spent seven weeks at Warrior Transition Course after transferring to the Nebraska Army Guard from the Navy Reserve.

So when Benitez was promoted to be the supervisor of the Scottsbluff Post Office, it seemed like a good idea to get him on the next National Guard Bosslift.

On Aug. 3, as he sat in the bleachers at a range on Camp Guernsey, Wyo., watching other Bosslift participants fire the kind weapons few civilians ever handle, Benitez said he was impressed.

"I would have never thought that they made you guys do all this," he said. "I thought they'd bring you out here, march you around, make you run to the hills ... it's amazing."

"It just made me appreciate more what he's doing and what you guys are doing out here."

The Nebraska Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve sponsored two Bosslifts during

the Seven-Victor-Six exercise in early August at Camp Guernsey, transporting about 60 employers, educators and influential people from across Nebraska to Wyoming to participate in a day of Guard training.

"We do Bosslifts primarily to give the employers and the educators an insight into what really goes on when folks go to annual training or when they do duty," said Bill Nelson, executive director of Nebraska ESGR.

Many civilians still believe stereotypes about the National Guard, that drill weekends are filled with beer drinking and card playing, he said.

"A lot of folks don't understand that when they go out there, the troopers are actually... learning warrior skills, making them better Soldiers and better employees," Nelson said.

Bosslifts also cement relationships between educators and recruiters, letting teachers see what some of their students will one day go through.

They also help gain the support of the civilian employers of Guard Soldiers, he said.

Bosslifts are particularly effective during a large exercise like Seven-Victor-Six, said Lt. Col. Kevin Garner, executive officer of the 92nd Troop Command, which along with some of its subordinate units was conducting annual training at Camp Guernsey.

"They get to see their Soldiers doing what they signed up to do," he said.

The first 2009 Seven-Victor-Six

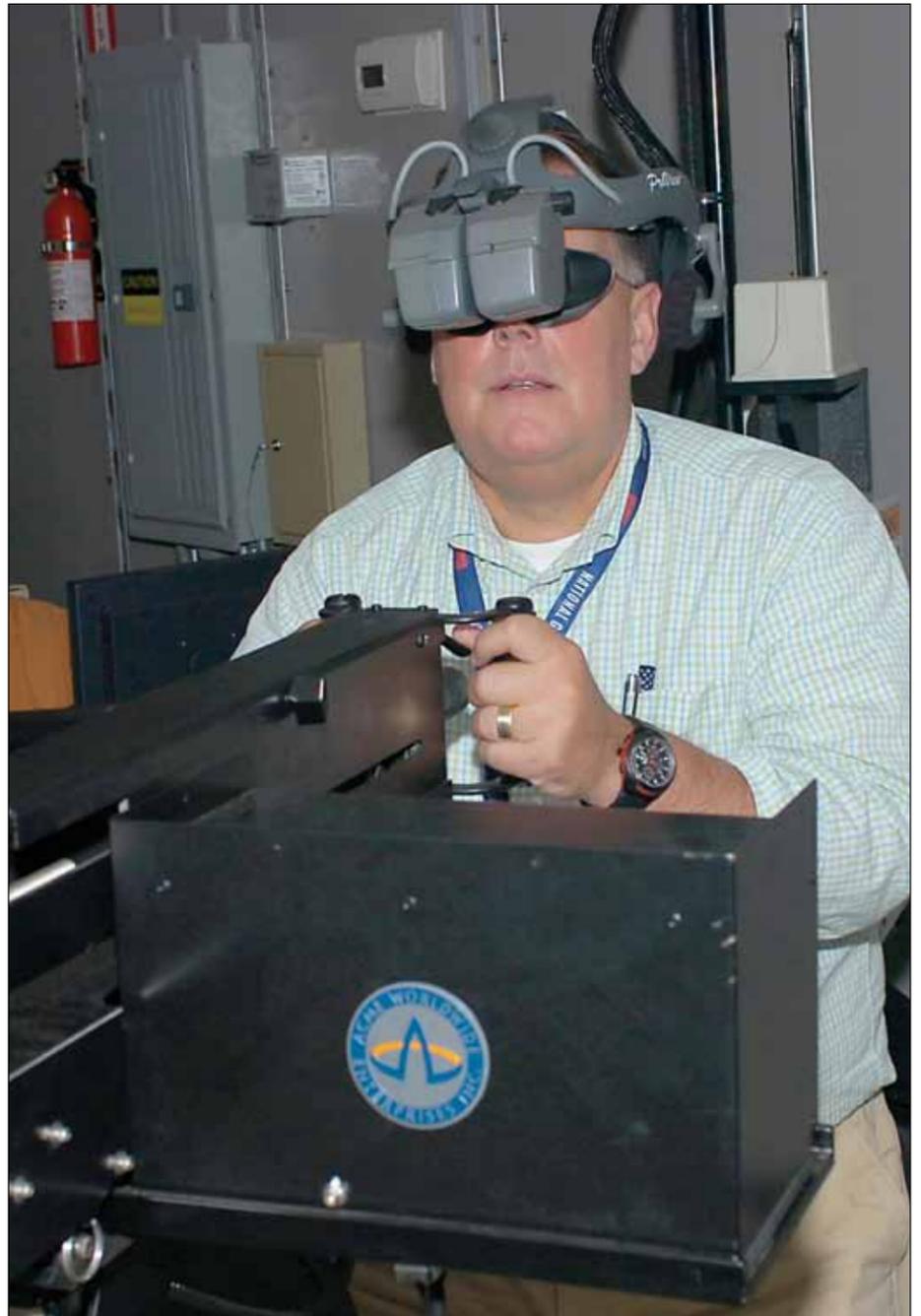


Photo by Capt. Andrew Nelson

Eyes On Target: Rob Slauson, principal of Lincoln Southwest High School, blasts targets in the Camp Guernsey, Wyo., simulation center with a .50 caliber machine gun during the Aug. 3 Bosslift operation. "I think I made a few kills! That was sweet!" Slauson said after the exercise ended.

Bosslift was on Aug. 3. The second Aug. 10. The first primarily involved about 25 people from the western half of Nebraska, while the second was made up of about 30 nominated from the eastern half of the state.

Bosslift participants were flown to Wyoming by Army National Guard aircraft. Once there, most of the participants started at the Simulation Center at Guernsey where they were given an orientation by Garner, allowed to shoot on simulators and fed a Meals, Ready-to-Eat (MRE.)

Then they were flown by a CH-47 "Chinook" helicopter to a range where they were allowed to fire a .50 caliber machine gun. (In the second Bosslift, two separate groups, one flying out of Kearney and Ogallala, the other out of Lincoln, took part. The one from Kearney and Ogallala started at the range before going to the Simulation Center).

At the Simulation Center, the educators, community leaders and bosses got to train in the Virtual Convoy Operations Trainer, watch a group of Soldiers practice escaping from a turned-over vehicle at the Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer, and simulate fighting enemy troops on the Engagement Skills Trainer, among other things.

All this – the live fire shooting, the simulated war, the Soldiers training – made quite an impression on the civilians.

"I think I made a few kills. That was sweet!" said Rob Slauson, principal of Lincoln Southwest High School, after using a mock .50 caliber machine gun to simulate engaging computerized terrorists in a virtual reality Bagdadh.

Slauson said he was impressed by how efficient the VCOT is; by using a simulator Soldiers aren't destroying anything or expending ammunition, "but we're still getting the same kind of experience."

Tom Hastings, president of the Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce, said he was wowed by how quickly Guard Soldiers are able to prepare for a complicated modern asymmetrical battlefield.

"What amazes me is the things that each individual troop goes through," he said. "We as civilians think they do a little training... we don't realize the things they have to know and the things they have to do."

Judy Amoo, dean for business and individual training at Western Nebraska Community College in Scottsbluff, was impressed by how the Army has responded to a particular problem (vehicle rollovers) by creating a simulator to help Soldiers survive it.

"It's really sophisticated and it's really reassuring to think that kind of thing is going on in our military," she said.

"It's nice to see that the military is responsive," she said, "and can prepare its own training models to respond to stuff like that."

Not all of the participants lacked military experience. Some were actually seasoned veterans, like Dean Matheson, a staffer for 2nd District U.S. Rep. Lee Terry, R-Neb. Matheson has served in both active and reserve forces and is a veteran of the first Gulf War.

A lot has changed since Matheson was in the Army. Soldiers didn't have equipment like CamelBak's in his day. And the fact that officers no longer wear branch insignias on field uniforms took some getting used to.

But a lot hasn't changed, he said, pointing to the Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer where, as he and others watched, four Soldiers climbed out of the toppled vehicle and took up security positions without being told to do so.

"It's still that hard-driving dedicated professional," Matheson said. "What makes an American Soldier unique, that internal drive, I'm still seeing."



Photo by Capt. Andrew Nelson

Taking the Wheel: A Bosslift participant drives a computerized vehicle during a simulated convoy in the Simulation Center at Camp Guernsey, Wyo. The Bosslift operation was designed to give Nebraska employers and other civic leaders an opportunity to learn more about what Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers do during annual training. The operation was sponsored by the 92nd Troop Command from Lincoln, Neb.

Long Overdue Homecoming

Guardsmen honor fallen Nebraska Soldier 43 years after his death in Vietnam

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon
Assistant Editor

On a chilly, overcast October Saturday, a community came together to lay to rest one of its heroes while allowing a family to finally receive closure more than 43 years overdue.

With help from the Nebraska National Guard Honor Guard and chaplains (Col.) Rod Armon and (Maj.) Philip Houser, who presided over the ceremony, Laurel, Neb., native Spc. 5 Donald C. Grella finally was wished farewell, Oct. 3, in the town where he grew up.

According to his obituary, Grella was drafted into the Army in February 1961 and served two years as a crew chief for fixed wing aircraft. After his discharge, Grella reenlisted a year later with the intent of making a career out of the military. He served in Korea as a crew chief for 14 months before requesting an assignment in Vietnam.

Once in Vietnam, Grella became part of a unit that established a base at An Khe in the Central Highlands. On Dec. 28, 1965, Grella and three others left An Khe on a short service mission flight.

They never returned.

In the days and weeks that followed, neither the aircraft nor the crew was found. Grella and his crew mates were listed as missing in action until Dec. 29, 1966, when their status was changed to presumed dead.

Over the more than 43 years Grella was missing, his family never gave up hope they would eventually find him. That's why they fought so hard to ensure the search didn't end. Instrumental in that process was his sister Shirley (Grella) Haase who provided the eulogy at her brother's funeral, thanking those in at-

tendance for remembering 'Don.'

"There's a phrase that we've heard occasionally over the years," said Haase. "Dying for this country isn't the worst thing that can happen to me – being forgotten is. You people are living proof that Don was never forgotten."

Following a 1985 lead from a Vietnamese refugee, a crash site was located near An Khe, Vietnam in April 2006. A March 2009 excavation produced artifacts and remains believed to be those of the missing aircraft and crew. The artifacts and remains were returned to the United States and on June 1 the remains were positively identified as the doomed aircraft and crew.

Now, after more than four decades, Grella was finally brought home as hundreds of local citizens, veterans, friends and family, many holding American flags, filled the Laurel-Concord High School gymnasium.

Haase recalled the fond memories she had of her brother while growing up on a rural farm near Laurel. An avid hunter, angler and trapper, Grella also had a passion for all things Elvis, copying his hair style and even owning blue, suede shoes.

Haase struggled to express the feeling of finally having her brother home.

"Since we received the news that Don's remains had been found, we've been asked many times how it feels and there's just no one word to describe the emotion," she said. "Some sadness as we confirm his death. Some sense of relief that this long journey comes to an end. But for the most part, this is a time to celebrate, to celebrate that one who was taken from us 44 years ago has now returned to us."

Haase said her brother always loved being a Soldier and believed they were doing the



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

Final Farewell: Members of the Nebraska National Guard's Honor Guard hold the American flag above the casket containing the remains of Spc. 5 Donald C. Grella at the Laurel Cemetery in Laurel, Neb., Oct. 3. Grella had been missing in Vietnam since Dec. 28, 1965, but a recent investigation and excavation of a crash site in Vietnam positively identified the remains of Grella, three other crew members and the doomed aircraft.

right thing in Vietnam.

"Don was very patriotic," said Haase. "He was in Vietnam because he chose to be in Vietnam. He believed our military was there to do a job and he was proud to serve."

Following the funeral, Grella's remains were interred at the Laurel Cemetery between the graves of his parents. There, members of the Nebraska National Guard Honor Guard carefully folded the American flag that had been draped over

Grella's casket, as two Nebraska Army National Guard UH-58



Not Forgotten: A yellow rose sits on an American flag-draped casket containing the remains of Spc. 5 Donald C. Grella during the Laurel, Neb.-native's funeral at the Laurel-Concord High School, Oct. 3, some 43 years after the Soldier died in Vietnam.

helicopters saluted the fallen warrior with a dramatic fly over.

According to the National Guard participants, they were proud to have had the opportunity to honor the fallen Nebraskan. They also said they hoped the funeral would help provide the family with some degree of closure.

"It's a great honor to help," said Sgt. Katherine Smith, a cook with the Lincoln-based 267th Ordnance Company (Direct Support Maintenance) and four-year member of the Honor Guard.

"I'm happy that we can do it for them and that they can finally get some closure."

Air Guard dentists, technicians display skills during mission to base in England

By Senior Airman Brandon Kusek
Staff Writer

RAF LAKENHEATH, England — On any given drill weekend, Nebraska Air National Guard dentists and dental technicians from the 155th Medical Group in Lincoln, Neb., keep pretty busy performing dental inspections on members of the Nebraska Air and Army National Guard.

But on a recent trip to Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England, the 155th MDG dental team got to put their training and expertise to real-world use.

For two weeks this summer, the Air Guardsmen helped members of the RAF Lakenheath-based 48th Dental Squadron treat local patients for a wide array of issues. It was an experience the Guardsmen rarely get in Lincoln, said Dr. (Lt. Col.) Scott Shaddy, 155th MDG chief of Dental Services.

"In Lincoln we're only allowed to diagnose patients, we can't treat them," said Shaddy. "But here... since we couldn't refer patients off base, we were able to see and treat them. We helped out and made a big difference."

The timing of the two-week mission was especially significant, said Senior Airman Krystal Yambor, 155th MDG dental technician.

"The (48th) dental clinic was going through deployment and (permanent

change of station) transitions with doctors and technicians leaving. They were scheduling people more than 30 days out, so our coming was crucial to them," Yambor said.

Senior Master Sgt. Evelyn Stanley, superintendent 48th Dental Squadron, said the Nebraskans made an almost immediate impact.

"They came in and integrated into our schedule perfectly. It was a testament to them how we didn't have to do any back-training... they really hit the ground running," she said. "It really showed how we're all military professionals... there was no active duty/Guard line."

Yambor said the people of the 48th DS were very helpful in making the short transition as smooth as possible "They were so willing to help us. We did one day of orientation then hit the ground running," she said. "They gave us the equipment we needed and provided us with patients."

Shaddy, who is a practicing dentist, approached each work day in England as a normal day. In the eight working days the Nebraska staff spent at Lakenheath, the Guardsmen saw 56 patients, doing more than \$15,000 worth of dental work.

The people who were treated by the Lincoln Airmen were impressed. Yambor recalled one story from a pleased

customer.

"We had a (military) dependent (patient) that we did some restorations for, but had to schedule for more work. She asked if we could do the follow-up work on her, but her return time was after we were scheduled to leave. She was disappointed saying we were 'So great to work with.'"

According to Staff Sgt. Ben Winston, 155th MDG dental services noncommissioned officer-in-charge, he and Yambor don't work in a dentist's office outside of the Guard, so the experience they received in England was extremely beneficial.

"The hard work and training we did was invaluable because of the hands-on experience we received," he said. "I was busy doing cleanings all week and I really enjoyed the one-on-one patient interaction and care I was able to provide."

According to Stanley, the 48th DS was able to open another appointment book for family members due to Winston's presence.

"We were able to see more people than normal. It was a great example of them coming in and hitting the ground running," she said. "Anyone who has thoughts on working with the Guard or Reserves needs to work with a unit like this... they are a prime example of top Air Force professionals."



Photo by Senior Airman Brandon Kusek

Say Ahhhh: Dr. (Lt. Col.) Scott Shaddy, chief of Dental Services for the 155th Medical Group, and Senior Airman Krystal Yambor, a Nebraska Air Guard dental technician, complete a dental procedure on a patient at RAF Lakenheath where the two Guardsmen supported an active Air Force dental clinic during their unit's two-week mission to England.

"This particular team is more than welcome to return and work with us anytime," she added.

Warrant Officer Candidates paint Ashland green in July



Photo by Sgt. Michael Coleman

Brushing Up Ashland: Warrant Officer Candidate Mike Shottenkirk paints an Ashland, Neb., lightpole green during his Warrant Officer Candidate class' community service project, July 12.

July community assistance project reinforces importance of Nebraska National Guard service to future warrant officers

By Sgt. Michael Coleman
Staff Writer

Nine Soldiers stormed the town of Ashland, Neb., recently, armed with paint brushes and a desire to lend a helping hand.

The Soldiers were students attending the Warrant Officer Candidate School at Camp Ashland and their mission was to spruce up the city of Ashland by repainting green light posts that line the downtown area.

The Warrant Officer Course requires the candidates conduct a community service project as part of their leadership training.

"The most challenging part of the project was finding something we could do on the day set aside for the project," said Warrant Officer Candidate Gregory L. Nun, class community project coordinator.

The candidates spend five drill weekends training at Camp Ashland before traveling to Camp Atterbury, Ind. for two weeks of training.

During their time at Camp Ashland, the Soldiers had one day scheduled for the community service project.

"We chose to do a project close to Camp Ashland to allow us to spend more time helping the community instead of traveling," said Warrant Officer Candidate Chad M. Bayne, class leader during the July 12 project.

Working in the Ashland community provided the candidates with experience they wouldn't receive otherwise.

"It is good to get out of the classroom and use your leadership skills in a different environment," said Bayne.

The service project was also an opportunity for the Citizen Soldiers attending the course to learn the importance of being leaders in their communities as well as in the military.

"When we do projects like this it reminds people that the National Guard is here to help out," said Bayne.

"It helps bring the National Guard to the public eye," said Nun. "It makes people aware that we are here to help the community."

The National Guard has played a large role in the ongoing War on Terrorism causing them to be absent from the communities they belong to, Nun said. "With our deployment schedule it is more important than ever to work within our communities because it shows that we really care and are here," he added.

The candidates said there were some definite perks to working on such a public community service project.

"The best part of the project was people from the community complimenting our work and thanking us for helping in their town," said Nun.

The warrant officer candidates completed their course work in August and graduated on Aug. 22.

Nebraska warrant officer school graduates second in-state class in August

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

The Nebraska Army National Guard's warrant officer ranks grew by nine, Aug. 22, when the second in-state Warrant Officer Candidate School graduated during a ceremony held at Camp Ashland's historic Memorial Hall.

"Today is the first and one of the most important steps you will take as you enter commissioned service as a warrant officer in the United States Army," Maj. Gen. Tim Kadavy, then-adjutant general told the assembled graduates before swearing them in as warrant officers.

"The oath of office you are about to take signifies that you have completed your initial leadership and academic training and are ready to lead our nation's most important resource: our sons and daughters."

The in-state Warrant Officer Candidate School is five-month program designed to prepare Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers for the challenges awaiting them as warrant officers.

The program begins with five monthly drill weekend sessions where the warrant officer candidates receive leadership and academic training both in the classroom and in field environments.

It then culminates with a two-week training session at Camp Atterbury, Ind.

According to newly commissioned Warrant Officer Chad Bruce, the course was definitely challenging.

"It's a sense of relief," said Bruce, shortly after he received his silver bars with a single black square from his wife Amy and Kadavy. "It's a sense of ac-

"These are difficult and challenging times that will continue on for some time into the foreseeable future. Our nation needs talented and capable leaders... experts in their fields of specialty."

— Maj. Gen. Tim Kadavy

complishment, but it's more a sense of relief that we can finally get started on what we started the whole task or journey (for)... starting our new jobs and actually having an impact in a new way other than as (noncommissioned officers.)"

Along with Bruce, Warrant Officer Candidate Class 09-001 consisted of: Chad M. Bayne, Kearney; Dale L. Dishman, Lincoln; Carrie L. Monismith, Austin, Texas; Gregory Nun, Iowa, Neb.; Brandon J. Robinson, Alliance, Neb.; Vally J. Robinson-McDonald, Clay Center, Neb.; Joshua J. Schaaf, Atkinson, Neb.; and Michael P. Shottenkirk, Lincoln.

Kadavy said the Army needs leaders who are experts in their personal military specialties who also have the ability to lead Soldiers into an uncertain future.

"You are about to become part of a team that has a tremendous responsibility of defending our great nation," Kadavy said. "These are difficult and challenging times that will continue on for some time into the foreseeable future. Our nation needs talented and capable leaders



Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Congratulations Mom: Warrant Officer Vally J. Robinson-McDonald receives her new warrant officer bars from her husband Ronald McDonald and their son Ronald Jr. Moments later the young McDonald pounded the bars down onto his mom's shoulders, following the example of Maj. Gen. Tim Kadavy.



Repeat After Me: Maj. Gen. Tim Kadavy, then-adjutant general of the Nebraska National Guard, administers the oath of office to the graduates of Warrant Officer Candidate Class 09-001, Aug. 22.

(who are) experts in their fields of specialty."

"We need you," he added. "Know that you are up to the

task."

Bruce said he definitely feels like he learned a lot about himself during the course.

"Probably the biggest thing is self-development and self-understanding," he said. "I learned about myself more than anything... it gives me something to lean on for my strengths and an ability to look at my faults and weakness and learn from them."

Robinson-McDonald said she also learned a lot from the course, adding that it was good to finally have graduation day arrive.

"It feels good. It's a relief," said Robinson-McDonald, laughing as she recalled how her six-year son Ronald D. McDonald Jr. followed Kadavy's lead and punched down on his mother's new silver bar several times during her commissioning ceremony.

"It's almost like taking off one backpack and putting on another," she said. "There will be quite a bit of responsibility that will come with it too, but it's nice to have that old backpack off."

Gold Rush

Nebraska Soldiers face accelerated leadership challenges during Officer Candidate School in South Dakota

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

Timothy Wobig couldn't believe his bad luck.

Sitting on a grassy plateau in western South Dakota that faced out toward the smoky ruggedness of the Black Hills, Wobig tried to concentrate on the map he held tightly in his lap as he listened to an instructor repeat the directions for the upcoming land navigation test.

Studying the map closely, Wobig couldn't figure out what he'd done wrong the day before.

Having served in the active and inactive Marines for eight years, map reading had normally come easy to Wobig, who had taken a break for several years to complete college before joining the Nebraska Army National Guard Soldier with the goal of becoming a commissioned officer.

Just barely a week into the two-month accelerated Officer Candidate School program at Fort Meade, S.D., Wobig was faced with the first major challenge of OCS. Pass the map reading test and continue on.

Fail... well, that really wasn't an option, Wobig thought.

About an hour earlier Wobig had talked about the reasons why he had chosen to join the Guard barely a month earlier with the goal of attending OCS.

"Being an enlisted (Marine) in the Marine corps, I always looked up to the officers," Wobig said, standing in an empty classroom at the historic Black Hills post that a century earlier

had served as an important U.S. Army cavalry installation.

"When I was in the Marine Corps, my peers told me... 'You should really think about OCS when you're done with this,'" he said, adding he hopes to use his enlisted experience to be a more effective leader.

"I think it will make me a better officer because I can relate with the enlisted guys more on a personal level because I know what they're going through."

Typically, OCS for a National Guard Soldier consists of an 18-month program conducted primarily at Camp Ashland, Neb., where prospective lieutenants are taught the skills they need to be successful Army officers in a variety of field and classroom settings. The program consists of a two-week training session followed by a year's worth of monthly drill weekend training exercises before culminating in a final two-week exercise.

For Soldiers that can't make the traditional OCS program work, the accelerated OCS is often a better fit.

Held from late May through July, the two-month accelerated program allows candidates to complete the OCS requirements in a much shorter time period.

According to Officer Candidate Charles McGreer, a member of the 1167th Brigade Support Company, the accelerated program was a much better option.

"I really didn't want to wait for a year to get my commission," said McGreer during a break in training in early June. "(My



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Grass Drills: Officer Candidate Timothy Wobig listens to instructions as he prepares to take a land navigation test during his eight-week Accelerated Officer Candidate School at Fort Meade, S.D.

unit is supposed to deploy in 2010 and I want to be ready for that."

"I know that the accelerated is a little bit tougher, but it's kind of a bargain," said McGreer, a dispatcher with Crete Carrier Corporation in Lincoln. "Instead of looking at a year-and-a-half...you get it in in eight weeks. And considering my family and my job, it's really the only option."

The third Nebraska Soldier who attended this year's accelerated course at Fort Meade along with more than 150 other Guard and Reserve Soldiers from across the western portion of the United States was Joshua Metcalf, a Valentine, Neb., native who is a full-time student at Southeast Community College. According to Metcalf, being able to complete OCS in two months was simply too good of an option

to pass up.

"I've had a lot of good leadership and worked for a lot of good officers and a lot of good non-commissioned officers. And I've really come to enjoy the Army," said Metcalf, who had served as a member of Company C (Long Range Surveillance), 1-134th Cavalry. "I want to be one of the ones that makes decisions as opposed to one of those out there executing."

"My unit is planning on deploying next year," he added. "I'm sure that I won't go back to that same unit, but I'm looking forward to another challenge... another trip."

As for Wobig, the second time through was the charm. Earlier, he'd failed the map-reading course because he'd made a simple computation error, which caused him to go completely off track.

Making the correction, he was able to complete the land navigation course with a 100 percent grade.

A few weeks later, Wobig and his three Nebraska classmates gathered at Memorial Hall at Camp Ashland, where on Aug. 22 they graduated from the program along with 10 members of OCS Class #52. Wobig said he learned much from the experience in South Dakota.

"Leadership; being able to make a decision in stressful situations and just being there for your troops," said Wobig.

Wobig added he realizes it's just the first step of many that now faces him as an officer.

"It's a great sense of accomplishment," he said. "And with this sense of accomplishment comes greater responsibility and I look forward to that challenge."

Camp Ashland graduates 13 from Officer Candidate School programs

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

The latest crop of second lieutenants was sworn into the Nebraska Army National Guard, Aug. 22, when the Nebraska National Guard's Officer Candidate School graduated 10 Soldiers from the traditional 18-month program and three others from the two-month accelerated course.

"This is a very important first step to your service as a commissioned officer," Maj. Gen. Tim Kadavy, then-adjutant general for Nebraska, told the graduating candidates before officially swearing them in as commissioned officers.

Kadavy also offered three pieces of advice.

"Always take care of your Soldiers. Treat them with fairness. Treat them with justice. And treat them with respect," he said. "Make sure they are trained to the best of your abilities. If you take care of them, they will take care of you and they will follow you wherever you have to lead them."

"Second, we are all leaders in the United States Army, but we all have a boss. When given an order, execute the order to the best of your ability and ensure the success of the mission," he said.

"And lastly, we all have a responsibility to render reports to superior officers and commanders. We do this because we want them to have every piece of information, every piece of advice, every piece of intelligence that will assist them in making the right decision at the right time that will influence the battlefield and ensure success."

According to the graduates, it's good to finally begin concentrating on becoming strong and effective officers.

"I don't know if enjoyed is the right word, but looking back at the last 15 months, I got a lot out of it," said 2nd Lt. David E. Stott. "I made a lot of close contacts and a lot of good friends who will obviously be people I can rely on in the future."

"This is the highlight of my career," added 2nd Lt. Harry I. Schwartzfeger Jr. "If five years ago anyone would've said I would be here today, I would have laughed at them. It's just so surreal."

Schwartzfeger added he felt



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Careful With Those Pins: Newly commissioned 2nd Lt. Charles McGreer watches as his brother, Capt. William McGreer, pins the gold bars of a second lieutenant onto his shoulders, Aug. 22, at Memorial Hall on Camp Ashland, Neb., after McGreer graduated from Officer Candidate School.

prepared for the challenges ahead. "There's just been so much that I've learned. It just seemed like every drill weekend or every day during Phase III that there was something new that I was learning."

Graduating from OCS Class 52 were:

- John P. Burroughs, Omaha. A three-year military veteran, Burroughs is being assigned to the 1167th Brigade Support Company as an ordnance operations officer.

- Willie E. Garrett III, Cairo, Neb. A 12-year military veteran,

National Guard since 2007. He has been assigned to the 1-376th Aviation (Security and Support) as an aviator.

- Ryan E. Thompson, Neligh, Neb. An eight-year military veteran, Thompson is currently assigned to the Nebraska Army National Guard's Recruiting and Retention Command.

- Clifford J. Irwin, Kennard, Neb. A 10-year military veteran, Irwin is being assigned to the 267th Ordnance Company (Direct Support) as a platoon leader.

- Luke A. Holland, Axtell, Neb. A two-year military veteran,

Garret has been assigned to the 195th Forward Support Company (Special Operations) as a transportation officer.

- Jason A. Kivett, Lincoln. Kivett is a 14-year military veteran. He has been assigned to the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade as an intelligence officer.

- David E. Stott, Scottsbluff, Neb. A four-year veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, Kivett has served in the Nebraska Army

Holland has been assigned to the 126th Chemical Battalion as a chemical officer.

- Mark E. McClure, Omaha. An 11-year military veteran, McClure has been assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-376th Aviation (Security and Support) as an aviator.

- Harry I. Schwartzfeger Jr., Omaha. A three-year military veteran, Schwartzfeger has been assigned to the 267th Ordnance Company (Direct Support) as a platoon leader.

- Joel J. Welshons, Ashland, Neb. A seven-year military veteran, Welshons has been assigned to the 402nd Military Police Battalion as a personnel officer.

Graduating from the 2009 Accelerated Officer Candidate School were:

- Charles E. McGreer, Lincoln. McGreer has been assigned to the 1167th Brigade Support Company as a platoon leader.

- Timothy D. Wobig, Norfolk, Neb. An eight-year veteran of the U.S. Marines, Wobig has been assigned to the 41st Rear Operations Center as a chemical officer.

- Joshua Metcalf, Valentine, Neb. A four-year military veteran, Metcalf has been assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-134th Cavalry, as an insertion and extraction officer.

PRAIRIE SOLDIER SPECIAL FEATURE

The Nebraska Army National Guard simply couldn't do its mission without the hundreds of professional noncommissioned officers that make up its ranks. From the command sergeants major who are responsible for looking out for the morale and welfare of their troops, to the supply sergeants who makes sure that Soldiers have the equipment they need, to the medical sergeants who maintain Soldiers' health and treat their wounds, to the drill sergeants who ensure that Soldiers start their careers on the right foot, the Nebraska Army National Guard depends on the quality and professionalism of its NCOs to make sure that the hard jobs get done right the first time. They literally are the backbone of the Army.

As part of the Army's continuing Year of the NCO observance, the Prairie Soldier spotlights the work that Nebraska Army National Guard NCOs do on a daily basis to ensure that the Nebraska Army National Guard is ready, trained and capable to do its mission.



PATRIOTS in Stripes

Electrician strives to empower Soldiers

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

Empowering. When it comes to describing what Sgt. Neal Stocking does in the Nebraska Army National Guard, that simple word tells volumes.

Stocking is an interior electrician with the Wahoo-based 623rd Engineer Company (Vertical Construction) and the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of Headquarters Section, 2nd Platoon. It's a job that's both challenging and rewarding at the same time.

"(It's) extremely fun. We get to do things that we normally don't get to do in the civilian world," said Stocking, a national accounts premium representative for an insurance company in Omaha. "We're doing hands-on stuff and when we're done with a project, we can actually see the results of our labors."

For Stocking, his Nebraska Army National Guard assignment is actually his second go at a military career. From 1985-94 he served in the active Air Force, working first as a C-130 "Hercules" crew chief and later as a manpower specialist.

He said that about a decade after leaving the Air Force he started thinking about restarting his military career, this time in the Nebraska Army National Guard.

"I'd been out of the military for about 12 years and wanted to get back in," Stocking said. "So I went to a local recruiter and he said they were getting a new company going."

That new unit was the 623rd Eng. Co., which would eventually grow to include a detachment based at the Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings. Stocking said

2009
YEAR OF THE
Strength from within **NCO**

Sgt. Neal Stocking
Hometown: Omaha, Neb.
Job Title: Interior Electrician,
Wahoo, Neb.
Years of Service: 12
Family: Wife: Anne;
Sons: Jeff, Chris

the more he learned about the fledgling construction unit, the more interested he became in learning to be an electrician.

"It was the one construction skill that I lacked the most knowledge in, so it was something that I wanted to learn," he said.

Stocking enlisted into the Nebraska Army National Guard in 2006 and soon began learning the electrician's trade. Simply put, Stocking said, Army electricians are responsible for bringing power to new structures.

"For an electrician, it's pretty much like an electrician on the outside. You're bringing power into a structure, making sure that the structure is wired according to the plan, running those wires, doing checks on the wires before applying power to the outlet and then, once power is applied, doing checks on all of the service connections – light switches and outlets – (and) making sure they're wired properly."

Stocking recently attended the



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Job Site: Sgt. Neal Stocking, an interior electrician with Wahoo's 623rd Engineer Company (Vertical Construction,) stands near a unit construction site at the Mead Training Site this summer during his unit's annual training.

two-week Warrior Leaders Course at Camp Ashland, Neb., where he received academic and leadership training in the responsibilities of a first-level NCO. Having already attended two similar NCO courses in the Air Force, Stocking said the course was an eye-opening experience.

"Personally, because I was in the Air Force before, I didn't have a whole lot of exposure to combat skills," said Stocking during a recent break during his June 6-26 annual training at the Mead Training Site in eastern Nebraska.

"I'm learning a whole lot of that real fast."

Based upon what he's learned thus far, Stocking said he definitely sees some parallels in the roles that NCOs play in the Army and Air Force.

"NCOs in the Army and NCOs in the Air Force are responsible for leading their lower enlisted (Soldiers and Air-

men,)" he said.

That's particularly true in the 623rd Eng. Co., Stocking said.

"NCOs train the younger enlisted in their specialties," he said. "For me as a (sergeant) I'm mostly training electricians, but (also) on their basic Soldier tasks, weapons cleaning, weapons qualification, mounted and dismounted patrols."

That ability to develop each individual Soldier's skills and knowledge base is what makes noncommissioned officer so important, he added.

"It's very critical," he said. "The knowledge that NCOs receive through their leadership courses enables them to train the individuals to the best of their abilities."

Empowering – whether it's new buildings or enlisted Soldiers – is essentially what being a sergeant is all about.



Photo by Sgt. Michael Coleman

Giving Directions: Master Sgt. David A. Davis, personnel sergeant for the 168th Quartermaster Petroleum Supply Battalion from Scottsbluff, Neb., points out the various safety procedures that have been put into place at a Camp Guernsey, Wyo., .50 caliber machine gun range for a Aug. 10 Bosslift exercise to Brig. Gen. Roma Amundson, assistant adjutant general, Army. Co-workers say that Davis is a stickler for making sure each detail of an operation is worked out precisely, one of many lessons he learned as an infantryman serving in Vietnam after being drafted into the Army on his 21st birthday.

Guard Sergeant uses experiences from Vietnam, Afghanistan to lead Soldiers

By Sgt. Michael Coleman
Staff Writer

Some people see him as a strict by-the-book disciplinarian. Some see him as a gritty battle-hardened veteran. There might even be some foul names used to describe him.

While these descriptions may appear accurate they don't begin to describe Master Sgt. David A. Davis, personnel sergeant for the 168th Quartermaster Petroleum Supply Battalion in Scottsbluff, Neb.

Davis entered military service on his 21st birthday, Jan. 14, 1969, when he was drafted for the war in Vietnam. He spent an extended tour in country as a small arms rifleman.

Until chance intervened this was the end of Davis's military career.

"I was at a VFW meeting and

2009
YEAR OF THE
Strength from within **NCO**

Master Sgt. David A. Davis
Hometown: Scottsbluff, Neb.
Job Title: Battalion personnel sergeant, Scottsbluff, Neb.
Years of Service: 22
Family: Sons: Jacob, Nicholas, Noah

a buddy asked me if I ever thought about the Guard," said Davis.

After learning more about the organization, Davis enlisted into the Chadron, Neb., unit as an artilleryman under the "Try One" program.

After reenlisting for another year, a full-time position opened up. Davis has never looked back.

Davis said the discipline and order of the military appealed to him. But those weren't the only reasons he stayed in the Guard.

"When I got hired on full-time I could see the importance of what I was doing," said Davis.

Working in administration is vastly different from being an infantryman, but Davis says it is just as important. Davis discovered one of his great-grandfathers joined the Confederate army when Lt. Gen. Robert E. Lee called for volunteers. Another relative served in Ohio's Company E, 141st Regiment.

"If it wasn't for some clerk in the rear I would have never known," said Davis. "Record keeping is **See DAVIS on 17.**

Sergeant leads by example

By Sgt. Michael Coleman
Staff Writer

Halfway through their annual training after having traveled over 200 miles to pick up equipment and drive it to a training site in Des Moines Iowa, Nebraska National Guardsmen of CERF (Chemical, biological, radiological/nuclear and explosive Emergency Response Force) were exhausted.

Trucks and trailers squeezed their way between emergency vehicles into an area half the size of what they were accustomed to. The vehicles were quickly unloaded and driven back through the mayhem to their staging area.

Crews scrambled about trying to move equipment out of the way of the next wave of vehicles while beginning to set up a chemical decontamination site in the cramped area.

Directing much of this apparent chaos was Sgt. 1st Class Bruce A. Nakai, the Decontamination Team noncommissioned officer-in-charge for the Nebraska CERF.

One of the traits of a good NCO is the ability to lead by example. It's something that Nakai has taken to heart.

"He always puts the mission first and strives to take care of Soldiers above all else," said Capt. Russell L. Stewart the CERF Decontamination Element commander.

"He sets the example in everything he does," said Russell. "He holds the highest standard for himself that I have ever seen."

The standard that Nakai holds is directly tied to his leadership style. Nakai said one has to be a morale builder and be able to motivate one's team to be an effective leader. To do that, a person has to lead from the front.

"Leading is more about respect... not power," said Nakai. "You have to lead from the front to get that respect."

The respect Nakai has earned from his Soldiers allows him to motivate them to perform at the best of their ability. Russell said Nakai instills a loyalty in his troops that makes them



Photo by Sgt. Michael Coleman

Keeping the Exercise Rolling: Sgt. 1st Class Bruce Nakai works with other unit leaders to ensure that Nebraska Soldiers assigned to the state's CERF (Chemical, biological, radiological/nuclear and explosive Emergency Response Force) are ready to participate in Exercise Vigilant Guard 2009 in Des Moines, Iowa.



Sgt. 1st Class Bruce Nakai
Hometown: LaVista, Neb.
Job Title: Decontamination Team Noncommissioned Officer-in-Charge, Omaha, Neb.
Years of Service: 11
Family: Wife: Amy, Daughter: Kailyn

willing to go beyond what they would normally be willing to do because they don't want to disappoint him.

Nakai has earned the respect and loyalty, say his superiors as well as his subordinates.

"He is someone that all service members, junior and senior enlisted as well as officers, can go to on advice," said Russell. "He is the single-most important element of the decon element."

Nakai couldn't have earned this respect from his Soldiers and superiors without the competence that he has gained through experience.

"He knows what it takes to be a good leader because he has had so much experience between schools and deployments," said

Spc. Benjamin J. Suttle, a decontamination team member.

Nakai started his career as an infantryman at Fort Benning and attended Ranger School before joining the Nebraska Army National Guard. About eight years ago he transferred from infantry to chemical reconnaissance.

Nakai said it's important to enjoy one's job because a person's attitude will reflect it. And that attitude has a great bearing on the morale of the troops.

"Taking care of troops is your sole purpose," said Nakai.

Suttle said while deployed to Iraq he was able to approach Nakai with personal problems that he was having. "He is good at going from being a very good leader to a very good friend," said Suttle.

Nakai isn't just a leader to his troops; he is their mentor.

"He is one of my role models," said Suttle. "I strive to be like him."

Nakai said mentoring is extremely important in developing a young leader.

Nakai said Sgt. Maj. Brian Folts has been his biggest mentor. Folts was Nakai's first sergeant when he joined the Guard.

"I learned a lot by watching and talking with him," said Nakai. "Everything I have as a leader, I developed by watching him."

DAVIS continued from page 16.

important."

Spc. Damon J. Schlenker, an administration specialist with 168th QMBn., said Davis taught him to do every job to the best of his ability.

"He taught me that even the most mundane task has a purpose and affects Soldiers' careers."

Although technologies and techniques have changed since Vietnam, Davis has kept up with the times, an important skill when he deployed to Afghanistan recently as an embedded tactical trainer. As an ETT Davis fulfilled one of an NCO's primary roles: training Soldiers, this time new members of the Afghan National Army.

"I liked the Afghan people," said Davis. "They are just like anyone else, just trying to raise a family."

"When I was in Afghanistan, that was easy compared to when I was in Vietnam," Davis added.

The way that Americans treat

veterans is one of the many differences in Davis's experiences. Traveling home from Vietnam Davis said he called his dad to pick him up from the airport and asked him to bring civilian clothes because of the protesters.

"Now everyone wants to shake your hand when you come home," said Davis. "I am still bitter, but this did a lot to make up for it."

The experiences Davis has gained through two wars has shaped his approach to leadership. Staff Sgt. Jay L. Weitzel, supply sergeant for the 168th Quartermaster Battalion, said Davis uses those experiences to ensure that Soldiers are treated the right way.

"He has seen how Soldiers were treated when they came back from Vietnam, so he has a fatherly care for his Soldiers."

Master Sgt. Stephen M. Foster, operations sergeant for the 168th Quartermaster Battalion, agreed, saying Davis has learned the importance of

discipline while serving tours in Vietnam and Afghanistan.

"He was brought up to do things the right way," Foster said. "He lives his life and military career that way."

"He is always there to maintain the standard. He is passionate about it," added Schlenker.

Sometimes his no-nonsense, by-the-book attitude makes him seem unapproachable at first, said Weitzel.

"Some of his Soldiers are scared of him when they first meet him, but they respect him once they get to know him," said Weitzel. "He is stern, but fair. He comes off as gruff, but he always has his Soldiers' best interest at heart."

Davis said he is particularly interested in taking a strong interest in a Soldier's career progression. "I have an admiration for someone who wants to further their career. Hopefully I've helped some of them along the way."

Career lessons help Nebraska sergeant take care of 'her' Soldiers

By Mark Roland

Unit Public Affairs Representative

Growing up in Wayne Neb., Staff Sgt. Tonya Schwanke, combat medic section sergeant and full-time administrative non-commissioned officer for the Omaha-based 195th Special Operations Forward Support Company (Airborne), knew she wanted to be a member of the military.

"I had started thinking about it my junior year," Schwanke said. "A family friend was a recruiter up in Wayne and he started talking to me about it when I was younger."

"My dad was in and my grandpa was in. I don't have any brothers, so it was something that I always wanted to do... to follow in their footsteps. It was the challenge at the time; I was planning on going to college, but I wanted something else... more than just that."

Schwanke enlisted into the Nebraska Army Guard as a personnel specialist with the 105th Personnel Detachment where she said she quickly learned about the importance of taking care of Soldiers. A deployment to Jordan and Kuwait in 2003 deepened those feelings.

"In Kuwait it wasn't as much the paperwork as just keeping track of where people were," Schwanke said.

Returning from deployment Schwanke completed college and graduated in 2006 with a bachelor's degree in Business Finance and Criminal Justice.

Instead of pursuing a civilian career, Schwanke chose a military path when she became a full-time administrative sergeant for the Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP) at Camp Ashland.

"I learned a lot when I worked at the RSP. Full-time is completely different than doing it part-time," Schwanke said. "When you're (part-time) it's easy to think that this issue that I'm having isn't getting taken care of, but on full-time side, once you see how much is actually involved in taking care of the Soldiers in the unit, it opens it up to see how much work the full-time NCOs do to make sure everything is straight for (annual trainings), drills and the people that are deploying."

In January 2008 Schwanke became one of the first members of the newly organizing 195th SO FSC (Airborne.) She later became the first female member of the Nebraska Army National Guard to complete airborne. Since then her job has become even busier.

"The 195th is a little different than other units in the state because we fall under the active duty component out of Fort Bragg, (N.C.), the 528th Sustainment Brigade. Not only do we have to answer to the battalion and the brigade here in Nebraska,



Photo by Mark Roland

Keeping Paperwork Straight: Staff Sgt. Tonya Schwanke, 195th Special Operations Forward Support Company (Airborne), checks up on some paperwork at the North Omaha Readiness Center.



Staff Sgt. Tonya Schwanke
Hometown: Lincoln, Neb.
Job Title: Administrative Sergeant, Omaha, Neb.
Years of Service: 9
Family: Single

we have to also handle things for (Fort Bragg,) too - what's going on, reports and different information that they ask for all the time."

As a unit within the United States Special Operations Command the 195th SO FSC (Airborne) handles Soldiers differently than most units of the Nebraska Army National Guard. "We have individuals that (mobilize) all the time, instead of deploying as a whole unit," Schwanke said. "We have four Soldiers that are just returning now from deployment and we have seven Soldiers that are leaving. That's another part of our (unit) that is different that regular units. We are constantly having Soldiers that are mobilizing."

"We have mechanics, a medic section, a water treatment section, fuelers, a cook section and a supply section. We have a combat engineer section which includes carpenters, masonry, electricians."

The USSOCOM pulls individual Soldiers and teams to fill slots in support of operations around the globe, with tours ranging from three weeks to seven months.

Schwanke is responsible for making sure that all administrative functions are completed so that Soldiers are paid correctly.

Schwanke balances her time on drill weekends between the administrative needs of the unit and her section sergeant responsibilities for the medics. Schwanke credits her ability to take care of her Soldiers to the lessons she has learned throughout her career.

"All your experiences help you."

155th Civil Engineering Squadron greets new commander in July

By Capt. Camara Minks
Staff Writer

The 155th Civil Engineering Squadron welcomed a new commander as Lt. Col. Robert E. Hargens assumed command from Lt. Col. Gary J. Krupa during a ceremony, July 12.

Krupa took a few minutes before the handing over of the guidon to express his thoughts on his tenure as the commander of the CES.

"I have loved being CE commander. It's been a great assignment. I couldn't think of a unit I would rather command," said Krupa.

"But it has become apparent that we really lacked full-time leadership."

Krupa is a traditional Guardsman, serving as the CE commander only on drill weekends.

"It's really important for (CE) to have a full-time commander," said Krupa. "I was very pleased and relieved to get somebody of the caliber and quality of Lieutenant Colonel Hargens to take this position. It's what the unit needs and what the unit deserves."

Krupa has served as the 155th CES commander since April 2007 and has been a member of the Nebraska Air National Guard since 1987 when received his commission at the Academy of Military Science.

During his time with the Nebraska Air National Guard, Krupa has served in many

different leadership positions, both in the state and supporting operations overseas.

Krupa has been on deployments to Alaska, Panama, Germany, and Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. In 1997, he deployed to Canadian Forces Base Cold Lake.

"This unit (CES) has had a great history. I'm proud to have been a part of it for 16 of the past 22 years," said Krupa.

Krupa graduated from Archbishop Ryan High school in Omaha, Neb., and earned a bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering and a master of Public Administration degree from University of Nebraska Omaha. He is married with four children.

Krupa has since accepted an assignment as inspector general for the 155th ARW.

Hargens thanked those involved in the ceremony and his family for their support over his many years of service in both the Marine Corps and the Nebraska Air National Guard.

"Sam, Shi, Savy and Cole, I am extremely proud of each of you," said Hargens. "My wife Kelie - she truly epitomizes what a spouse should be."

Hargens, a naval aviator and KC-135 pilot, has a bachelor's degree in Construction Management from the University of Nebraska.

Even with this background, Hargens said the totality of what the engineering squadron does on a day-to-day basis is an enigma to many on and off base.

"I have begun to realize there are many people on this base that do not have a true understanding of the civil engineering squadron. I know because I was one of them," said Hargens.

"The only time most of us think about CE is when our building is hot, cold, broken or on fire, when the snow is piling up, or we are having an ATSO, or we're trying to figure out what to do with that WWII grenade that

Grandpa left in his basement."

The 155th CES has many different areas of specialties, 15 to be exact, including fire protection, heating and cooling, electrical and structural activities, pavements, pest management, and explosive ordinance disposal.

Hargens acknowledged the sacrifices all members of 155th CES have made during the past years.

"If you are an engineer and you wear the uniform, you will deploy, you will fight and you will win the hearts and minds of the people in the countries we are deployed to," said Hargens.

Hargens began his military career in 1987 in the United States Marine Corps as an AH-1W Cobra Pilot. He served on two western Pacific deployments and later became a Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics School night systems instruction and logistics administrative and maintenance officer.

In 1997 he was assigned as an AH-1W instructor and evaluator pilot in a reserve squadron in New Orleans, La. He held that post until 1999 when he returned with his family to Nebraska and joined the 155th ARW as a KC-135 Stratotanker pilot.

Hargens was activated with the 155th ARW shortly after Sept 11, 2001.

Hargens was hired full-time in 2002, serving as scheduling officer, conventional plans officer, chief of Tactics, chief of Safety, and deputy chief of Standards and Evaluations.

"The Nebraska Civil Engineers are fighting while the world watches," Hargens said. "We are proving that we are professionals, ready and able, that no fight or sacrifice is too great for us. America is fortunate to be served by the men and women in civil engineering."



Hargens



Krupa

Nebraska Army Guard chemical battalion honors new, old commanders

By Mark Roland
Unit Public Affairs Representative

Nebraska's "Dragon Soldiers" received a new leader, Aug. 2, as Lt. Col. Chad Stevens passed command responsibility of the 126th Chemical Battalion to Maj. Troy Paisley during a ceremony at the South Omaha Armory.

Stevens has been the commander for over two years and leaves to become the director of Personnel for the Nebraska Army National Guard. Stevens was praised by then-Col. Judd Lyons, 92nd Troop Command commander, for his dedication during his tenure.

"This organization has grown over time to embrace new missions," said Lyons, who has since become the Nebraska National Guard adjutant general. "It has been validated and served in several significant domestic operations including the Democratic National Convention last year, which was a national special security event. The 126th Chemical Battalion and the CERF (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and high-yield Explosive) Enhanced Response Force) just performed in an outstanding manner and represented Nebraska in the highest tradition."

Under Stevens command the unit also participated in Operation Vigilant Guard in Des Moines, Iowa.

Paisley started his National Guard service when he joined the chemical battalion as the personnel officer when the unit first stood up in 2001. A year and a half later he was selected to command the 754th Chemical Company commander and deployed with the unit in 2003 for Operation Noble Eagle to Fort Riley, Kan.

After serving in several other positions in the Nebraska National Guard and deploying to Afghanistan with an Afghan National Army Embedded Training Team, Paisley returned to the chemical battalion as the administrative officer earlier this year.

Paisley said he's excited to command the organization. "I know a lot of the Soldiers," Paisley said. "It's really an honor for me to come back here."

One of Paisley's first decisions as the new battalion commander is to bring back the call "Through the Flames."

"From now on when we stand at attention or render a salute to a senior officer, they state 'Through the Flames.' Through the Flames is kind of the mantra of the Chemical Corps and our battalion crest states that on the bottom," Paisley said. "It's one of those things that stand you apart from everyone else. We have a special unit here and we can do special things."



Paisley



Stevens

Guard's rear operations center changes leaders

By Mark Roland
Unit Public Affairs Representative

Lt. Col. Matthew Kelly passed command responsibilities to Lt. Col. Todd Stevens for the 41st Rear Operations Center (ROC) during a ceremony at Greenleaf Training Site, Aug. 9.

Kelly deployed with the unit to Macedonia in 2001 (then known as the 41st Rear Area Operations Command (RAOC)) as an intelligence officer and to Iraq in 2003 as an operations officer and commander in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

After serving as the 192nd Military Police Detachment provost marshal, Kelly returned to take command of the ROC on Sept. 17, 2007.

He leaves the unit to become the Joint Force Headquarters as the assistant personnel director for the Nebraska National Guard.

"A lot of my career has been spent with the ROC from a captain on up," Kelly said. "It's good to move on to other things, but at the same time it's kind of bittersweet."

"It's been a distinct honor and privilege to have served as your commander," Kelly said, thanking the Soldiers of the unit during his departing remarks. "You should be proud of what we've achieved here. You've done your duty with a willingness and enthusiasm that's hard to match."

Stevens has served in the active Army, and the South Dakota and Nebraska Army National Guard.

He deployed with the RAOC as the plans officer in 2003 to Iraq and Kuwait in support of the Global War on Terrorism.



Photo by Mark Roland

New Command: Lt. Col. Todd Stevens salutes his new command shortly after the change of command ceremony for the 41st Rear Operation Center, Aug. 9. Stevens assumed command from Lt. Col. Matthew Kelly.

Long-time cavalryman returns home to lead Nebraska Army Guard squadron

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

The Nebraska Army National Guard's 1-134th Cavalry welcomed back a former long-time cavalryman on the historic plains of Camp Guernsey, Wyo., when Lt. Col. Thomas Rynders assumed command of the organization from Lt. Col. Brett Andersen, July 24.

Rynders began his military career when he joined the U.S. Air Force Reserve in 1984. He joined the Nebraska Army National Guard in 1987 when he enlisted into the 1-195th Armored Task Force as a combat medic.

He then received his commission as a second lieutenant in 1990 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at the University of Nebraska-

Kearney.

He has held a variety of staff and leadership positions in the Nebraska Army National Guard's 1-195th Armored Task Force and 1-167th Cavalry including executive officer for the 1-167th Cavalry Security Forces team that deployed to Kuwait in 2001 and operations officer for the 1-167th Cavalry's 2003 deployment to Bosnia-Herzegovina as Task Force Husker.

His most recent deployment was in 2006 when he served as the senior Guard advisor to the U.S. 5th Corps at Camp Victory, Iraq.

Rynders transferred to the Active Guard and Reserve program in 2004 when he accepted a position at National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Va., as an action officer and branch chief.

Rynders and his wife Kristine have four children: Justin,

22; Sydney, 18; Tanner, 17; and Samantha, 16.

In relinquishing command of the 1-167th Cavalry, Andersen was presented with the Meritorious Service Medal from Col. Philip Stemple, commander of the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade.

Andersen began his military career in the Nebraska Army National Guard in 1985 when he enlisted as an anti-armor infantryman in Crete's Company E, 2-134th Infantry. He was commissioned through the Nebraska Army National Guard's Military Academy in 1995.

Since then he has held a variety of leadership and staff positions throughout the state.

He deployed to Afghanistan in 2005 as the operations officer and plans mentor for a Nebraska Army National Guard Mobile Training Team. He currently is assigned as the administrative officer for the 67th BfSB.

Andersen has three children: Austen, 19; Kramer, 16; and Katie, 13.



Rynders



Andersen

Enlightening Employers

Annual Bosslift exposes state's community leaders to National Guard, Reserve training, professionalism

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon
Assistant Editor

Cameras at the ready, they stand impatiently in line like children waiting to see the mall Santa.

Slowly, but surely, anticipation grows. Soon, their faces transform into smiles as they each take their turn, the air echoing with such words as "cool" and "amazing."

These smiling faces are not those of children, however. They are the faces of grown men and women – community pillars from across Nebraska – as they waited to see a B-52 bomber flying mere feet from the KC-135R Stratotanker they were passengers in as the two aircraft met approximately 20,000 feet above the rolling ground below and conducted the aerial dance that is mid-air refueling.

This refueling mission was

one of many military displays that occurred during the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve "Bosslift" that took the community and business leaders from Nebraska to Riverside, Calif., July 22-24.

The ESGR Bosslift is intended to give Nebraska employers the opportunity to see what their Guard and Reserve employees do for the military outside of their civilian careers.

"Basically (Bosslifts) give employers an understanding and show them what Guardsmen and Reservists do on a daily basis," said Peggy Brown, assistant program support specialist for the Nebraska ESGR. "Whether it's during their annual training or what they do when they're deployed, (it) just kind of gives them a sense of what their employees do when they're gone."

By seeing and experiencing a cross-section of what Guard or

reserve employees are capable of doing, the ESGR program hopes to broaden employer understanding of the training required to perform military jobs.

"These are things that until you touch it, feel it, see it, you don't know," said Brown. "I think it helps them understand the type of training that this person goes through and the discipline and the dedication (that's required.)"

Reasons for participating in the Bosslift were varied.

"I want to be able to bring it back to people in my community," said Vaughn Wright, funeral director and owner of Harman-Wright Mortuary in Beatrice, Neb. "You can help and do things in your community to make it easier for these guys."

Others were simply curious about what really goes on when their employees are training with the military.

"I know very little about the military," said Brad Philson, first vice president and trust officer for Union Bank in Lincoln. "It sounded like a great trip and a great opportunity to learn more."

Along with the refueling mission that was conducted enroute to California, the employers were exposed to a variety of military equipment and briefings during the three-day event.

After arriving at March Air Reserve Base, the employers were driven to the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos. There, they toured an Army Black Hawk helicopter hanger, got an up-close view of the aircraft and sat in the pilot's seat.

They then moved onto a tour of one California's emergency management centers where officials coordinate responses to a variety of emergencies.

Employers also put themselves in the shoes of their deployed Guard and Reserve service members when they tried out the Virtual Convoy Operations Trainer, which uses virtual reality to simulate the various duties reservists conduct during a convoy, in this case through Baghdad.

Finally, they tried their hands on the Engagement Skills Trainer where the employers used



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

Great View: Mike Higgins of Lincoln, founder and chairman of Mike Higgins and Associates, shoots photos from of the "boom pod" of a KC-135R Stratotanker while Master Sgt. Mark Stocking, a boom operator with the 155th Air Refueling Wing, prepares to refuel a B-52 bomber in mid-flight.

laser-fitted weapons, including M-4s, M-16s, and M-249 Squad Automatic Weapons, to react to realistic combat scenarios projected onto a wall.

During the second day of the trip the group received several tours at March Air Reserve Base in Riverside, Calif. Starting at the Air and Marine Operation Center where military and other law enforcement agencies track thousands of sea and aircraft every day while looking for unusual activity on the borders and within the U.S., the employers then toured one of the largest aircraft in the Air Force's fleet, the C-17.

The employers then got a close-up view of an F-16 jet fighter and spoke with pilots from March's 144th Fighter Wing. They then wrapped up the day with a tour of the Defense Media Center where Armed Forces Network television and radio programs are collected and distributed to service members stationed around the world.

Before returning to Lincoln on July 24, the Nebraska employers were given a briefing on the unmanned aerial vehicle, the Predator, from Geneva, Neb.-native Lt. Col. Dana Hessheimer, director of operations for the Predator program for the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing at March ARB.

With the variety of things the employers were able to see, favorites varied.

"The briefings actually were the most interesting to me," said Lori Keller, a manager at McDonald's in York, Neb. "AMOC was something that I really enjoyed, the intelligence part."

"I really enjoyed the C-17," said Wright. "Being able to see that and just how big those actually are."

The favorite part of the trip for

Philson may have even helped him overcome a personal fear. "The refueling was super cool," he said. "I'm not a huge fan of flying and yet lying there 25 feet from a bomber that's about to be refueled is just a phenomenal experience... an edge-of-the-world experience."

The employers were also able to interact with military members, ask questions and learn as much as possible.

That interaction can prove invaluable for employers and military employees, said Brown.

"The interaction that you see with the employers and the military members, I think that what's important to us," said Brown. "They really want to know, they want an understanding and they want to be able to get that word out."

The employers noticed the professionalism of the military members.

"They're very professional all around," said Wright. "They really know their stuff. Work ethic would be the biggest thing I see and that's something that we notice."

The goal of the ESGR Bosslift was to give employers a better understanding of what Guard members and reservists do during their training, in turn making the time employees spend away from their civilian jobs easier.

"I think as an employer you look at the level of responsibility, the things that are taught to these folks in the military," said Philson.

"The discipline, the respect that these folks garner and the fact that that's harder and harder to find sometimes in employees, I think that you really get some great folks coming out of the military or that are in the military – in the Guard."



Muzzle Awareness: Jim Trumbull, owner of Carr-Trumbull Do It Center in Scottsbluff, Neb., prepares to use the Army's Virtual Convoy Operations Trainer with help from Sgt. Drew Taylor, a training sergeant at the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos, Calif.

Nebraska Guardsmen encouraged to learn more about GI Bill

Each Nebraska National Guardsman is being encouraged to evaluate his or her GI Bill educational benefits and compare each program to determine which one will be best for each person's individual needs.

Post 9/11 GI Bill – Transferability of Benefits

The Post 9/11 GI Bill is also known as Chapter 33 GI Bill. Responsibility for determining eligibility for education benefits under the Post 9/11 GI Bill remains with the Department of Veteran Affairs.

To be eligible, a veteran must have served at least 90 days (combined) on active duty since Sept. 11, 2001, or must have served 30 continuous days if separated with a service connected disability. Currently, service must be under Title 10.

Army Guard Benefits Worksheet

There are some requirements that must be met in order for a Soldier to

School Notes

By Chief Warrant Officer 4
Robyn Huskey
Education Services Officer

transfer benefits to a dependent:

- Must be in the Armed Forces on or after Aug. 1, 2009;
- Must have completed at least six years in the Armed Forces;
- Must not have an adverse action flag;
- Must agree to additional service obligation – this obligation is dependent upon number of years of service for retirement, but no more than four years additional obligation.

The Soldier's election of Chapter 33 is irrevocable and requires relinquishment of eligibility in the other program (Chapter 1606, 1607, 30, or VEAP.) A Soldier may transfer up to 36 months of benefits to spouse, child or children.

A Soldier may add, revoke, or modify transferability benefits while actively serving in the Armed Forces.

Retirees or separated Soldiers can only revoke or modify existing transferred benefits. This is important because if a Soldier retires or separates and does not adequately allot the benefits to all dependents (dependents must be enrolled in DEERS to be eligible,) he or she cannot add an additional child later if for some reason the dependent selected does not utilize the benefit.

Currently, Soldiers are recommended to obtain step-by-step instructions, ARNG Benefits Worksheet, phone numbers, and Websites from the Education office in order to take advantage of this program.

Points to Consider:

- Currently, only Chapter 33 benefits are transferrable. Soldiers must make an irrevocable decision to take Chapter 33 over other programs to transfer the benefits;

• If a Soldier is going to school and utilizing benefits themselves, in many cases, it may be more advantageous to stay with the earned Chap 1607, Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP).

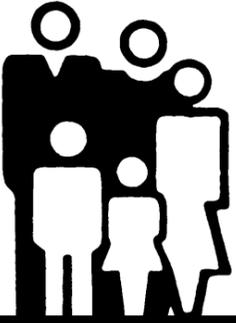
• Comparison between programs information should be reviewed prior to election.

Each situation is unique.

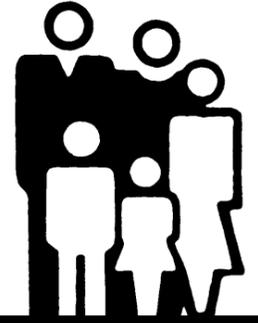
A person's Federal Tuition Assistance program will now pay first, Chapter 33 second, and State Tuition Assistance if still needed.

The intent of the program is to ensure that Soldiers do not to receive more than 100 percent of the tuition and fees total. Should that max be exceeded, the Soldier will be subject to recoupment from either the FTA or GI Bill program.

For more information for this and other education programs, contact me at robyn.huskey@us.army.mil or (402) 309-7313.



Guard Family NEWS You Can Use



Coping with deployments

Psychological First Aid for Military Families course

By Nick Farruggia
American Red Cross

The Coping with Deployments course was developed by the American Red Cross specifically to address the stresses and strains that deployments place on the families of service members. The Red Cross worked closely with subject-matter experts from all service branches to include the National Guard and Reserve components.

This course provides important information on resiliency strategies for adults and children, as well as explaining the steps required in performing psychological first aid for others under stress. It contains a two-and-a-half hour adult module and a one-and-a-half hour child module.

These modules provide flexibility so it may be taught in the separate modules or all at one time. Officials recommend conducting the course in a four-hour block. After the adult module is completed the instructor will dismiss those who do not need to participate in the child module.

This course is available to the family members of the Reserve, National Guard and active duty to include spouses, older children (16 yrs), parents, siblings, significant others, and service members who take it with their family.

The course is not available to the general public and is taught by actively licensed and specially trained Red Cross mental health professionals.

This is the only national-level course specifically designed for military family members, including parents and significant others, and bridges all lines of service and provides a hands-on tool to help families cope with deployments.

This course, or one of its modules, can be taught at Family Readiness Group meetings, Family Day events, briefings before, during and after deployments, and at many other activities.

This free course is limited to at least six attendees and no more than 25.

Please contact Nick Farruggia, American Red Cross, regional manager, Service to the Armed Forces, at (402) 343-7747 or email farruggian@usa.redcross.org to coordinate this training.

Vice president's wife urges continued support for nation's military families

WASHINGTON (AFPS) — The wife of Vice President Joe Biden met with New York National Guard personnel and their families in mid-September in Latham, N.Y.

Dr. Jill Biden visited with the family members of deployed service members and the professionals who support them and pledged her support for military families and noted that her efforts are, in part, personal.

The Bidens' son, Joseph Biden III, is a captain in the Delaware Army National Guard and is currently deployed to Iraq.

Doctor Biden has made sup-

port for the families of National Guard and Reserve members one of her priority issues as the nation's "second lady."

"I have talked to hundreds of service members and families in my travels around the country and I have listened to their concerns," she said. "As a military mom, this is personal to me too — and I am doing as much as I can to raise awareness of the special challenges that Guard members and their families face."

Doctor Biden is intimately familiar with the challenges of military families.

"Like all of you gathered here tonight, my family worries about our son and looks forward

to the day he comes back to us," she said at the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award ceremony Sept. 17.

"Our family also knows what a difference it makes when people reach out to show support, whether in school, in the neighborhood or in the workplace," Biden added during her address.

She pointed out the importance of honoring military families' sacrifices and service.

"I hope to encourage more Americans to think about how they can show appreciation for our military families," she said.

Army surgeon general dispels six common myths about suicides

The following myths and facts are pulled from Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. Eric B. Schoomaker's blog dispelling myths associated with suicide:

Myth: Non-fatal attempts are only attention-getting behaviors.

Fact: For some people suicidal behaviors are serious invitations to others to help them live. Rather than punishing or reprimanding someone who has expressed suicidal thoughts, offer help and alternative answers. Get them to talk to a chaplain or counselor. Suicidal behaviors must be taken seriously. If not addressed a thought of suicide can become an act of suicide.

Myth: A suicidal person clearly wants to die.

Fact: Most suicidal people are unsure about their intentions right up to the point of dying. Very few are absolutely determined or completely decided about ending their life. Most people are open to a helpful intervention, sometimes even a forced one. The majority of those who are suicidal at some time in their life find a way to continue living.

Myth: Most suicides occur with little or no warning.

Fact: Most people communicate warning signs of how they are reacting to or feeling about stressful events in their lives, whether it be a problem with a significant other, family member, best friend, superiors, financial matters or legal issues. Warning signs may present themselves as direct statements, physical signs, emotional reactions, or such behaviors as withdrawing from friends. When stressors and warning signs are present, suicide may be considered as the only option to escape pain, relieve tension,

maintain control or cope with stress.

Myth: You shouldn't talk about suicide with someone who may be at risk because you may give that person the idea.

Fact: Talking about suicide does not create nor increase the risk. The best way to identify if someone is thinking about suicide is to ask them directly. Avoiding the subject of suicide may contribute to suicide. Avoiding the subject reinforces a suicidal person's thought that no one cares.

Myth: Only a professional can help a suicidal person.

Fact: While long-term care should be handled by a professional, immediate recognition of a suicidal person or someone in need of help is up to you. By paying attention to what the person is saying, taking it seriously, offering support and getting help you can prevent a potential tragedy. Many are lost to suicide because immediate support wasn't offered.

Myth: Just because they talk about suicide does not mean they will actually go through with it.

Fact: Almost everyone who commits suicide has given some clue or warning. Do not ignore suicide threats. Statements like "You'll be sorry when I'm dead," or "I can't see any way out" — no matter how casually or jokingly said — may indicate suicidal feelings.

More resources are listed at health.mil/suicideprevention.

(Source: *The Military Health System Blog*, Sept. 16, 2009 - Posted by Health.mil staff)

Nebraska National Guard thanks BBQ group for work in supporting deployed units, families

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

A Nebraska barbecue group was honored by the Nebraska National Guard adjutant general, Sept. 30, for helping give Nebraska troops a taste of American cooking.

Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons officially thanked Tom Manhart for his work in preparing barbecue for Nebraska Army Guard Soldiers as part of Operation BBQ For Our Troops.

Manhart is the president of the Arlington, Neb.-based Midwest Division of Operation BBQ For Our Troops.

According to its Website, Operation BBQ For Our Troops is a non-partisan group of barbecue competition teams, backyard chefs and barbecue enthusiasts that is working to show appreciation to American troops by providing military members picnics that center around the uniquely American food.

The national organization has provided free picnics across the United States to military service members and their families either before or after a deployment.

Locally, Manhart has led the organization in providing food for members of the 313th

Medical Company (Ground Ambulance) during their pre-mobilization briefings and planned to prepare a similar meal for members of the recently returned Afghan Agri-business Development Team during their reintegration briefings.

Lyons officially thanked Manhart by presenting him with a plaque while also promising to visit his barbecue restaurant in the near future.

"As long as you folks keep going over to help protect us here in America, we'll be there to keep feeding you good, homemade barbecue," said Manhart as he accepted the award.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Thanks For Your Work: Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons presents Tom Manhart, president of the Midwest Division of Operation BBQ For Our Troops, for the work his group has done supporting deployed National Guard members and their families, Sept. 30, in Lincoln, Neb.

'Can't Never Did Anything'

On Aug. 23 I had the privilege to assume the position of adjutant general from Maj. Gen. Tim Kadavy.

Under his leadership our Nebraska Military Department, comprised of the Army and Air National Guard as well as the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), continued an outstanding tradition of service to our state and nation.

His are big shoes to fill. Major General Kadavy set us on a path of success and I am grateful for his leadership. Nebraska is fortunate to have Major General Kadavy at National Guard Bureau as the deputy director of the entire Army National Guard.

"Can't Never Did Anything." The statement may immediately resonate to you. If it doesn't, then its worth a second look.

The first time I heard it, I had to pause for a moment and think about what it meant. I now use this phrase to set the stage for my three priorities for the remainder of 2009 and through 2010 (FY10).

"Can't Never Did Anything".... it is an observation, a feeling, a philosophy and an approach to challenges and problem-solving.

All too often we are confronted by those who are quick to tell us what can't be done. We may even tell ourselves this. At times, it is simply easier to decide that we can't do something.

I believe we must not allow ourselves to be paralyzed by what we can't do...instead let's focus on what we *can* do. In fact, the times ahead demand it.

Now, to be clear, I am not advocating ignoring rules, regulations and policies that are set forth to guide our actions in a legal, moral and ethical manner. Rather, I

am advocating that we adopt a proactive approach that focuses our efforts where I believe they are needed most in Fiscal Year 2010.

Both of my predecessors led during unprecedented times. Our Soldiers, Airmen and state personnel responded time and time again to the call to duty here in Nebraska, in the Southwest border states, Louisiana and Texas to name a few.

Indicative of our transformation to a truly operational reserve, we deployed Soldiers and Airmen around the world in historic numbers in support of contingency operations.

We can all take great pride in our service to state and nation over the last eight years.

As I look ahead into 2010, I am convinced this reliance on our Guard will continue. We have numerous ongoing individual deployments, both Army and Air Guard.

Our Air National Guard is midway through its Air Expeditionary Force "bucket" with deployments in support of U.S. Southern Command and an upcoming deployment in support of U.S. Central Command.

The Nebraska Army National Guard currently has our 1195th Transportation Company serving in Iraq and, by the time of this publication, our 313th Medical Company will be at its mobilization station for their second deployment for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

We are at a low point in terms of number of units, Soldiers and Airmen deployed. This will

The Adjutant General Brigadier General Judd Lyons



change dramatically as we progress into FY10. I anticipate, based on current sourcing requirements for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, that we will mobilize and deploy the largest number of Soldiers for overseas contingency operations since 2001. This landscape serves as the driver for my three priorities for FY10 with the firm conviction based on my confidence in your skills and abilities of what we CAN do.

We CAN provide the best possible support to our families and employers. I am requiring all leaders, at every level of the organization, to keep our families and employers informed of activities and educated on support programs available to them.

This requires a holistic approach over the entire deployment cycle (before, during and after deployment).

Creativity and proactive, engaged unit leadership is the key here. Commanders must be decisively engaged in active partnership with unit Family Readiness Groups and the State Family Program and ESGR offices. Our commanders will also balance training with the needs of our families and employers.

We CAN remain relevant and ready to respond. I believe a healthy organization will take an introspective look at itself periodically to assess if

we have relevant force structure, capabilities and training facilities that support our state and federal missions. We do not change simply for change sake but must always posture ourselves to be relevant and ready

to respond to meet the governor's needs and those of our nation.

In conjunction with NEMA, our CERFP, CCMRF, CST, Quick Reaction Force and Firefighting entities are important response capabilities to be sustained. We have always excelled in training our Nebraska Guardsmen for missions both at home and overseas. I will continue to emphasize improving training facilities to enable pre-mobilization and pre-deployment training right here at home to the maximum extent possible. This is good for our people, their families and employers.

As we experience an increase in mobilized and demobilized service members, we will remain engaged in programs aimed at maintaining the physical and emotional well-being of our force, including PTSD/TBI awareness and suicide prevention training. This is our responsibility to our Soldiers and Airmen, their families and employers, and maintains our readiness posture.

As we look at new and relevant missions, I am very excited about the continued progress with our proposed bi-lateral relationship with Afghanistan. We must keep the momentum going to mature this initiative with an important first step of Army National Guard and Air National Guard nurse rotations to assist Afghan National Army and National

Police nursing curriculum development, training and education.

We CAN make the Nebraska National Guard the service of choice. I am convinced that we can grow in end strength in both the Army and Air National Guard. We can do so in a welcoming and inclusive environment reflective of the communities we serve, where our diversity is our strength and all have an opportunity to succeed. Nebraskans are ready, willing and able to serve.

For those who seek service, we want them in the Nebraska National Guard. We offer something that no other military service can...the opportunity and responsibility to serve our state and nation. This makes us unique.

The Nebraska National Guard is always ready and has always been there. We need to deploy our story into our communities with our main effort focused on our schools. We can focus our message on service and less on incentives. This is smart business in today's environment of reduced, fluctuating fiscal resources.

We won't ignore incentives and will use every one available, but they are the icing on the cake. Our Quality Boots Initiative incorporates this concept and also focuses our efforts to retain our best service members.

These are my priorities for FY10 and some amplifying thoughts on what they mean for the Nebraska Military Department. We can work together to meet the challenges ahead, accomplish our missions and support each other, our families and employers.

I am honored to serve as your adjutant general.

Nearly 17 years after starting job, milestone newspaper reached

In every life, there are milestones that a person can point to as moments of life-changing significance.

The day you met your future spouse. Your wedding day. The births of your children.

The list goes on and on. And for each person, the list is different.

For me, one moment is particularly memorable. Shortly before Thanksgiving in 1992 - I forget the date, but not the moment - I received a call from Vicky Cerino, editor of the *Prairie Soldier* at the time. She'd just accepted a job at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and she asked if I'd be interested in taking over the newspaper temporarily until a new editor could be hired.

Was I ever. I'd already been a full-time Army journalist for four years and since leaving active duty in 1990, I'd spent two of the last summers working part-time for the *Prairie Soldier*.

At some point during those two years I remember thinking, 'Boy, that would be a job I'd like to have someday.'

In the last week of November 1992 I started work on the December issue of the *Prairie Soldier*, my first as the acting editor. At the time I remember

My Turn

Editor, *Prairie Soldier*

Kevin J. Hynes



ment, I don't think so much about the places I've been, but rather the faces of the Soldiers and Airmen I've met and the stories I've had the honor to tell.

Early on in my career, somebody told me

being extremely nervous about being in charge of a newspaper that had already won numerous national awards, cautioning myself: 'Don't mess this up.'

The newspaper you are holding is my 100th as editor. And even to this day, I pinch myself thinking, 'I can't believe I get to do this for a living,' while also reminding myself, 'Don't mess this up.'

It's weird how strange twists of fate can change your life. This was exactly the case when I took on this job.

I loved the military and I loved working on newspapers. However, I never really thought I'd be given the opportunity to work on something that combined both passions.

Instead, I figured my path would lead me to leave the Guard and move on to the staff of some civilian newspaper.

Over the years, this job has given me many incredible opportunities to travel around the world and cover a wide array of fascinating stories.

But, in looking back over the nearly 17 years in this assign-

that within every person there is a story to tell - a story that deserves to be told - and it's the responsibility of a journalist to ensure that the story is told accurately and with passion.

Over the years, the *Prairie Soldier's* mission has evolved. But that core value and goal are still what drives me to work every morning.

Today, we are telling the story of the evolving nature of the Nebraska National Guard and its continuing affects upon the Soldiers and Airmen, their families and their communities.

It's a full-time job that I still feel as passionate about today as I did back in November 1992 when I was a nervous Army specialist, unsure if I'd be able to make it through a year here.

As I look back over 100 *Prairie Soldiers*, I realize that there is more behind me than there is ahead of me. But, while I don't know what the future holds, I do know this: this job has meant more to me and my family than I can ever really put into words.

And for that, I will be forever grateful.

Street Talk

"What is the toughest part of being a member of the National Guard?"



Sgt. Connie Smith
189th Transportation Company

"Sacrificing family time, especially when you have kids."

Staff Sgt. Rashida Crittenden
155th Security Forces Squadron

"The most difficult thing for me is child care. I have two kids, an 8-year-old and 6-year-old and many times people don't want to babysit on the weekend."



Staff Sgt. Josh Wessel
189th Transportation Company

"Missing a few Husker games because of Guard drill weekends."

PROMOTIONS

Army National Guard

Major

Daniel J. Benes
Brian P. Kane

Captain

Rachel A. Manske
Jonathan R. Vavrafont

First Lieutenant

Dennis R. Frey Jr.
Steven J. Jacobs
Lawrence D. Leathermon Jr.
Trevor J. Ocken
Joseph M. Sanchez III
Guinio W. Volpone

Chief Warrant Officer Four

Jason L. Graff

Chief Warrant Officer Three

Matthew D. Greathouse
Patrick L. Hegemann

Chief Warrant Officer Two

Corey L. Baker
Brandon L. Bennett
Eric V. Cole
Zachary S. Hartmann
Kelly G. Olinde
Jeffrey P. Switzer
Benjamin J. Weyers

Warrant Officer One

Heath A. Bragg
Chad M. Bruce
Dale L. Dishman
Carrie L. Monismith
Gregory L. Nun
Vally J. Robinson-McDonald
Joshua A. Schaaf

Michael P. Shottenkirk
Ryan J. Wullschlegler

Sergeant First Class

Leslee M. Araujo
Chad A. Schroetlin

Staff Sergeant

Carl D. Bassemier Jr.
Jeffrey A. Budig
James R. Bussen
Randy L. Fox
William D. Jacobsen
Adam J. Kosch
Nathaniel R. Menagh
Jose R. Torresgarcia
Rachell M. Weisgerber
Jake T. Whitaker
Erik A. Zlomke

Sergeant

Carisa M. Aldrichguerrero
Kally S. Andersen
Lori R. Barber
Anthony Bazalaki
Troy A. Bear
Benjamin J. Briggs
Jeremy M. Brill
Bryan P. Carroll
Justin T. Clausen
Michael G. Cordes
Anton J.R. Dall
Brittney N. Doyle
Evan D. Eberspacher
Jesse J. Evans
Oscar Garcia
Deryek C. Gerken
Lindsay S. Goodrich
Timothy J. Greiner Jr.
Vanessa D. Hunter
Damion T. Jackson

Omar A. Jones
Scott A. Kennec
Trevor J. Knecht
Monty L. Krueger
Megan W. Kummer
Matthew R. Lamb
Christopher J. Lammers
Christopher L. Loomis
Zack R. Marshall
Christopher W. Martin
Jesse J. Meints
Siera M. Misener
Jenee E. Montgomery
Robert T. Ohnesorge
Thomas W. Patzel
Michael W. Paz
Daniel W. Pierce
Amanda K. Robinson
Joshua K. Robinson
Tyler R. Sanderson
Justin L.B. Saner
Corey J. Scheidemann
Rodney A. Scherbarth
Tyler T. Schik
David L. Schoof
Marianne Schweitzer
Jeffrey D. Segelke
Grant D. Severson
Jennifer L. Short
Shawn M. Sims
Sherri L. Sklenar
Katherine K. Smith
Jedediah J. Struck
Alyssa B. Uldrich
Shane m. Walker
Derek S. Westring
Jody M. Worm

Specialist

Robert L. Anderson
Aaron C. Brodahl

Michael A. Clark
Adam J. Debock
Brody L. Eller
Matthew S. Engler
Joseph L. Felstow
Chip M. Hartman
Eric M. Holmes
Joseph J. Holson
Andrew G. Jarvis
Michelle J. Lindgren
Christopher K. Lohman II
Kyle D. Mostrom
Cameron L. Oden
Philip D. Pohlmeier
Matthew B. Smith
Joshua D. Starr
Jonathan C. Strong
Michael C. Swanson
Korey L. Thompson
Bradley A. Vanderzwaag
Dustin G. Wondercheck

Private First Class

Jake R. Ackland
Skylar E. Aegerter
Daniel G. Anderson
Rodney M. Andrews
Alyssa M. Arlauskas
Christopher L. Borreson
Alexander M. Bristol
Aaron C. Brodahl
William L. Bruce
Kyle D. Burton
Nickolaus R. Cruickshank
Kathryn J. Dennis
Andrea D. Edington
Michaela R. Fitzgibbon
Anthony M. Gilmore
Brandon C. Girard
Amy N. Glenn
Allen F. Goeken

Erin D. Gould
Matthew R. Helwick
Adam T. Hill
Kayla M. Jurgensen
Bradley L. Keller
Stephen R. Kuchar
Andrew J. Mason
James L. Miller Jr.
Lucas B. Mutschelknaus
Andrew D. Paben
Enrique Rodriguez
Nicholas J. Schwanke
Garrett J. Sund
Joshua R. Westwood
Ian R. Winkler
Dustin G. Wondercheck

Private Two

Adam M. Barnhill
Eric M. Dirks
Schylar C. Jensen
Aamee N. Johnson
Matthew R. Helwick
Sanchez D. Holguin
Justin M. McBride
Joshua S. Moser
David M. Mueller
Christopher N. Nixon
James E. Shields
William R.D. Walker

Air National Guard

Lieutenant Colonel

Robert K. Barnhill
Kent E. Peterson

Major

Andrew J. Malousek

Captain

Justin E. Hyde

James L. Otte
Caleb A. Ramsey
Joseph R. Remmenga

First Lieutenant

Bradley A. Bohn
Patrick J. Matol

Master Sergeant

Shandra K. Buser
Jon W. Pieters

Technical Sergeant

Corina Bartels
David Castillon
Erica Fisher
Jason J. Johnson
Jason Junge
Jason M. Melton
Bryan R. Schuka

Staff Sergeant

Luke Cada
Joseph Frerichs
Brent H. Frohner
Melonie M. Gustafson
Anthony J. Hipp
Tyler Kathol
Brian T. Krienke
Justin Merchant
Katherine Roewert
Andrew Starbuck
Krystal A. Yambor

Senior Airman

Amanda Grage
Timothy M. Rush Jr.
Courtney Scholtes
Mary Seeling
Logan West

AWARDS

Army National Guard

Legion of Merit

Maj. Gen. Timothy J. Kadavy
Col. Michael J. Johnson

Meritorious Service Medal

Col. Kevin L. Neumann
Lt. Col. Darin M. Krueger
Lt. Col. Charles L. Phillips
Lt. Col. Thomas G. Rynders
Capt. Matthew S. York
Command Sgt. Maj. Terry F. Eyer
Master Sgt. Ritchie E. Walker
Sgt. 1st Class Scott B. Gottschall
Sgt. 1st Class David B. Washington

Army Commendation Medal

Maj. Gordon F. Bjorman
Maj. Donald F. Buettner
Maj. Shane M. Martin
Maj. Gary A. Ropers
Capt. David P. Benak
Capt. Cory N. Huskey
Capt. Nathan L. Loose
Capt. Ian B. Worcester
Capt. Matthew S. York
Chief Warrant Officer 4 Randall D. Schlensig
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Eric M. Wiczorek
Sgt. Maj. Brian T. Folts
Master Sgt. Ritchie R. Walker

Sgt. 1st Class Kevin G. Jarzynka
Sgt. 1st Class Lucas L. Poppe
Sgt. 1st Class Christopher C. Roemig
Staff Sgt. Shawn M. Burton
Staff Sgt. Jeffrey D. Murphy
Staff Sgt. John J. Ruden
Sgt. Kyla M. Boersma
Sgt. Scott A. Kennec
Sgt. Erik M. Wolgan

Army Achievement Medal

1st Lt. Jeremiah A. Afuh
1st Lt. Joseph W. Neumann
2nd Lt. Nathaniel C. Krcilek
2nd Lt. Christopher J. Rees
Chief Warrant Officer 2 James C. Hurley
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Peter G. Steiner
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Dylan P. Welsh
Sgt. 1st Class Harley F. Fass
Sgt. 1st Class Mark J. Makovicka
Sgt. 1st Class Jason P. Sharp
Sgt. 1st Class Edward G. Whitehill
Sgt. 1st Class Jon J. Wren
Sgt. 1st Class Mark A. Zimmerman
Staff Sgt. Joshua R. Loos
Staff Sgt. Ricky R. Ruth
Staff Sgt. John H. Shuttler
Staff Sgt. Casey N. Sorensen
Staff Sgt. Robin J. Trosper
Staff Sgt. Joshua D. Wessel

Staff Sgt. Ryan M. Westmeyer
Sgt. Justin Clausen
Sgt. Dylan S. Eckery
Sgt. Elliott J. Gray
Sgt. Bret A. Liermann
Sgt. Jason L. Morrison
Sgt. Melanie A. Searight
Sgt. Dustin A. Seidler
Sgt. Connie L. Smith
Sgt. Gregory S. Wortman
Sgt. Ryan M. Zerbe
Spc. Nathan A. Dooley
Spc. Delbert D. Goedeken
Spc. Andrew L. Langan
Spc. Kyle D. Mundorf
Spc. Todd P. Poehlman
Spc. James R. L. Sons
Spc. Andrea N. Timperley
Spc. Tara M. Williams
Spc. Shane T. Zezulka
Pfc. Holden T. Isley
Pfc. Megan L. Curry
Pvt. Aamee N. Johnson

Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal

Lt. Col. Dale R. Vrana

Nebraska National Guard

Legion of Merit
Maj. Gen. Timothy J. Kadavy

Col. Judd H. Lyons
Col. Douglas M. Wilken
Sgt. 1st Class Timothy J. Mohatt

Nebraska National Guard

Meritorious Service Medal
Col. Richard H. Dahlman
Col. Michael D. Navrkal
Sgt. 1st Class Gary L. Richters

Nebraska National Guard

Commendation Medal
1st Lt. Kurt A. Hoagland
Staff Sgt. Rebecca R. Doerr
Staff Sgt. Joseph J. Dunlap
Staff Sgt. Randy R. Freye
Staff Sgt. Jason Kivett
Staff Sgt. Jacob W. Robinson
Sgt. Jerad E. Blocker
Sgt. Willie Garrett
Sgt. Charles E. McGreer
Sgt. Alan L. Rosenthal
Sgt. Dustin R. Seidler
Sgt. David Stott
Sgt. Cody A. Trindle
Spc. Jeremy S. Borrell
Spc. Justin L. Saner
Spc. Joshua A. Wilken

Nebraska National Guard

Individual Achievement Medal
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert P. Davis
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Monty A. Woodward
Sgt. 1st Class Stephen J. Stanislav
Staff Sgt. Brian W. Anderson
Staff Sgt. Richard A. Cole
Staff Sgt. Ryan M. Westmeyer
Sgt. Christopher R. Barondeau
Sgt. Riley P. Beaman
Sgt. Brock D. Chase
Sgt. Stephen T. Concon
Sgt. Stephen P. Dorsey
Sgt. Daniel J. Fellman
Sgt. Keith P. McDermott
Sgt. David McIntosh
Sgt. Christopher M. Niles

Sgt. Tyler R. Sanderson
Sgt. Jennifer L. Stolle
Spc. Casey G. Campbell
Spc. Trevor T. Dredla
Spc. Jeremy J. Hellbusch
Spc. Andrew Langan
Spc. Nathan R. McMullin
Spc. Brandon M. Meyer
Spc. Sarah J. Pieper
Spc. Aaron M. Rockford
Spc. Shawn C. Sheets
Pvt. Jessica A. Marlow

Air National Guard

Legion of Merit
Col. Daryl L. Bohac

RETIREMENTS

Army National Guard

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) David L. Smith
Chief Warrant Officer Two William K. Farewell
Sgt. Maj. David A. Rickers
Master Sgt. Terry F. Eyer
Master Sgt. Mark A. Larson
Master Sgt. Ritchie R. Walker

Sgt. 1st Class John P. Samson
Staff Sgt. Carl J. Surma
Sgt. Patricia J. Rupp

Air National Guard

Master Sgt. Lindell L. Failor

Shorttakes

Retired general, sergeant major inducted into Hall of Fame

By Maj. Kevin Hynes

Editor

The Nebraska Regional Training Institute Hall of Fame grew by two, Aug. 22, when two retired Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers were honored for their service.

Retired Maj. Gen. Walter E. Zink II and retired Command Sgt. Maj. David K. Hauschel became the 45th and 46th inductees into the Camp Ashland Hall of Fame.

"It is a great honor to have been chosen for induction into the Nebraska RTI Hall of Fame," Zink said in a letter that was read by retired Brig. Gen. Jim Murphy who represented the general during the ceremony, part of the Warrant Officer Candidate School graduation activities.

Zink was unable to attend due to his son's wedding at Georgetown University.

"I believe there's nothing more important in the military than to develop leaders for the present and the future. That is why Camp Ashland and the RTI hold such a special place for me," wrote Zink, adding that the education he received at Camp Ashland as a member of Officer Candidate Class 15 still resonate with

him today.

Zink, who retired from the military last year, ended his lengthy career as the commander of Operational Command Post I. There, he oversaw the training and readiness of the OCP and was responsible to command the OCP as a task force in response to consequence management operations.

He also commanded a joint task force, leading and coordinating the employment of air, ground and naval forces in the conduct of homeland defense and civil support operations.

Prior to this, Zink was assigned as the deputy commanding general (east) of the 5th U.S. Army where he was responsible for overseeing training and monitoring the mobilization readiness of the Reserve Component units within the 5th Army area of operations. He also was responsible for providing training assistance and training support for Reserve Component units in preparation for war and other contingencies.

During the course of his career, the general also served as the Nebraska National Guard assistant adjutant general (Army) and as a member of the Army Reserve Forces Policy Committee, which

identified, considered and addressed Reserve Component force structure, resourcing, manning and mobilization issues for the Secretary of the Army.

Zink was also "dual-hatted" as the assistant division commander of the 75th Division (Training Support) where he commanded and supervised active Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard Soldiers within the division headquarters and four training support brigades spread over a nine-state region.

In civilian life, he is a senior partner in the Lincoln, Neb., law firm of Baylor, Evnen, Curtiss, Grit and Witt. He is married to the former Carol Ann Thomas of Girard, Ohio. The Zinks have three children: Walter III, Robert and Carmela.

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. David K. Hauschel was inducted "for his dedicated service, leadership and dedication to the 209th Training Regiment from 1998-2006."

"During his assignment at the 209th Regional Training Institute, he invested hundreds of hours of personal time and was involved in the training of thousands of students," said Maj. James Oliver, 209th Regiment operations officer, while reading Hauschel's biography.

Hauschel began his military career in April 1972 when he enlisted into the U.S. Marine Corps. Attaining the rank of sergeant, Hauschel completed his enlistment in 1976 and then joined the Nebraska Army National Guard in 1977.

During the course of his Guard career, Hauschel served in a variety of leadership roles including squad leader, section leader, platoon sergeant and unit training noncommissioned officer in the 2-134th Infantry.

He also served as an assistant operations sergeant and operations sergeant in the Guard's 67th Infantry Brigade.

He was assigned to the 209th RTI in May 1998 when he was named commandant of Headquarters, 209th Regimental Training Institute NCO Academy. There, he was involved in the training of over 10,500 Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC) students, 5,775 Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (BNCOC) students and 1,500 Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (AN-COC) students.

He was also involved in the planning, coordination and exportation of the PLDC training to students in South Camp, Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, while also ensuring that all courses met accreditation standards and compliance.

From April 2005-July 2006 Hauschel was assigned as the command sergeant major for Nebraska's first Afghan National Army Training Assistance Group at Kabul Military Training Center. Upon his return, he was selected as the health systems specialist for the state.

Hauschel and his wife Dianne live in Lincoln. They have three daughters: Christine, Jessica and Sara.



Zink



Hauschel

New Name, Same Stiff Competition

State's best marksmen shoot for gold during new shooting exercise

By Mark Roland
Unit Public Affairs Representative

Nebraska National Guard Airmen and Soldiers representing units from across the state gathered at the Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb., Aug. 7-9, with their sights on gold when they participated in a weekend of shooting during the 2009 Adjutant General's Marksmanship Sustainment Exercise (AG-MSX.)

The annual event provides participants additional marksmanship training in a competitive environment.

According to Maj. Ross Finley, training site manager and state marksmanship coordinator, the name was changed from the AG's Shoot to the AG-MSX to emphasize that it was much more than just a competitive tournament.

"The differing courses of fire provide opportunities for the Soldiers to improve their marksmanship skills more than the usual qualification record fire on pop-up targets," Finley said. The feedback from the scoring helps the participant focus not just on hitting the target but on hitting it accurately in the center of mass or at a head shot, "this improves their ability to survive on the battlefield."

Finley said the participants fired more rounds during the weekend exercise than they normally would in three to five years of ordinary record qualifications. The AG-MSX also had Guardsmen firing weapons most participants may not normally get an opportunity to fire; they shot both the M-9 pistol and the M-16 rifle, with each participant firing 130 pistol rounds and 230 rifle rounds.

Participants completed seven different live fire scenarios, ranging from individual rifle and pistol qualification matches to a rifle team assault match. They also engaged a multitude of targets at varying ranges with varying target exposure timing.

For example, during the combat rifle "Excellence in Competition" match, Soldiers fired at a slow pace of fire –

six rounds in six minutes – from 300 yards. After each shot, the competitors received immediate feedback on where their bullets were hitting the targets through markers that were placed over each bullet hole.

In the reflexive fire match shooters fired rifles from 25 yards, engaging multiple targets at a much faster pace – six shots at three targets in four seconds.

The staff operating the ranges were subject matter experts in marksmanship, having competed in many national and international matches and many having earned the Distinguished Shooters Badge, President's 100 tab or Chief's 50 designation.

Those marksmanship experts provided training on such shooting fundamentals as position, breath control, sight picture and trigger squeeze. They also gave advice to participants at every opportunity.

"Overall the training should be helpful for all missions we deploy to do," Finley said. "Even if you're not out on convoy patrols, if you're working on a (forward operating base) as a maintenance technician, you never know when you may need it."

"This year we had a good turn out," Finley said about the 30 percent increase.

"In the future I hope every command is represented. It improves overall marksmanship and survivability."

At the end of the weekend a ceremony was held to recognize the top shooters. Individual and team awards were given, and 24 competitors were selected to attend additional marksmanship training held in September at the training site to further refine their skills while competing for the opportunity to represent the Nebraska National Guard at a national event during the Winston P. Wilson Warfighter Sustainment Training Exercise held at Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Ark., in October. The event brings together top shooters from all 54 states and territories to train and compete with more weapons and different courses of fire.

"The competition provides feedback



Photo by Mark Roland

Marksmanship 101: Lt. Col. Tom Brewer (top center) conducts a marksmanship class for participants of the 2009 Adjutant General's Marksmanship Sustainment Exercise, held Aug. 7-9 at the Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb.

which builds confidence," Finley said. "Confidence in your abilities builds success in battle or competition. A confident Soldier is a winning Soldier."

Nebraska National Guard Adjutant General Marksmanship Sustainment Training Exercise Awards

Match # 269 (Individual Alternate Pistol Qualification Course- 40 rounds fired at a type E silhouette from 25 yards from four different shooting positions.)

Novice 1st Place, Sgt. 1st Class Gerald Bouska; 2nd Place, Staff Sgt. Jason Allan; 3rd Place, Sgt. Tyson Gould
Open 1st Place, Staff Sgt. Steven Brewer; 2nd Place, 2nd Lt. Dennis Frey; 3rd Place, Sgt. Nathaniel Rutter

Match # 221 (Combat Pistol Excellence in Competition (EIC) Match - 36 rounds fired at a figure 11 pistol target from 15 yards in the standing shooting position.)

Novice 1st Place, Sgt. Abraham Garcia; 2nd Place, Sgt. Michael Ritterling; 3rd Place, Staff Sgt. Steven Jenny
Open 1st Place, Staff Sgt. Steven Brewer; 2nd Place, Staff Sgt. Adam Borer; 3rd Place, Sgt. Nathaniel Rutter

Match # 225 (Individual Service Pistol Championship – Aggregate of Match 269 and 221.)

Novice / Open 1st Place, Staff Sgt. Steven Brewer; 2nd Place, Staff Sgt. Adam Borer; 3rd Place, Sgt. Nathaniel Rutter

PRO Class 1st Place, Sgt. 1st Class David Anthony

Match # 369 (Individual Rifle Qualification Match – 40 rounds fired at the Alt-C Qualification Target.)

Novice 1st Place, Spc. Jeremiah Daugherty; 2nd Place, Sgt. 1st Class Gerald Bouska; 3rd Place, Staff Sgt. Jason Isaacs

Open 1st Place, Maj. Brian Medcalf; 2nd Place, Staff Sgt. Steven Brewer; 3rd Place, Staff Sgt. Steven Barnes

Match # 321 (Combat Rifle, Excellence in Competition (EIC) Match – 60 rounds fired in rapid and slow fire using various positions out to 300 yards.)

Novice 1st Place, Pfc. Matthew Poehlman; 2nd Place, Warrant Officer Jamie Hanway; 3rd Place, Sgt. 1st Class Gerald Bouska

Open 1st Place, Staff Sgt. William McClure; 2nd Place, Sgt. Zack Marshall; 3rd Place, Sgt. 1st Class Randall McHugh

Match # 302 (Rifle Reflexive Fire Match – 36 rounds fired at 25 yards in controlled groups using Close Quarter Battle (CQB) techniques.)

Novice 1st Place, 1st Lt. Clinton Brady; 2nd Place, Sgt. Jonathan Terry; 3rd Place, Spc. Shiloh Littrel

Open 1st Place, Staff Sgt. William McClure; 2nd Place, Maj. Brian Medcalf; 3rd Place, Staff Sgt. Adam Borer

Match # 325 (Individual Service Rifle Championship – This is an aggregate of Matches 321 EIC, 369 M16 Qualification, and 302 Reflexive Fire.)

Novice / Open 1st Place, Staff Sgt. William McClure; 2nd Place, Sgt. Zack Marshall; 3rd Place, Staff Sgt. Adam Borer

See SHOOTING on 24

Chemical Soldiers show off abilities during annual Dragon Challenge

By Mark Roland
Unit Public Affairs Representative

The Soldiers of the 126th Chemical Battalion gathered at Camp Ashland and challenged a dragon, Sept. 12-13, when they competed in an annual competition designed to determine the top chemical Soldiers in the Nebraska Army National Guard organization.

Eighteen three-person teams from the 126th Chemical Battalion's Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment from Omaha and the 754th Chemical Company Detachment from O'Neill were put through some major paces during the battalion's "Dragon Challenge," competition.

The competition is modeled after the Army's Expert Infantry Badge test with a chemical twist.

According to battalion officials, the Dragon Challenge was started approximately seven years ago by unit leaders, many of whom were former infantry Soldiers. The goal was to test the members of the Nebraska Chemical Corps units on Army Warrior tasks, individual chemical skills and teamwork.

"Anytime (Soldiers) have to do their common Warrior tasks people kind of shy away from it. It's not real motivating," said Maj. Troy Paisley, 126th Chem. Bn. commander. "But with this, because it is a competitive environment, people are more motivated to do it and it builds really good cohesion."

"If you ask the Soldiers, it's probably one of the more memorable things they will do this year," Pais-

ley said. "It takes out some of the mundane cycle of trying to do (the Army Warrior tasks.) It's a bit more competitive and easier to do it... It's these types of things that will make us successful on the battlefield."

From weapon skills tasks to chemical detector and alarm operations, each station tested the Soldiers' ability to accomplish things that are critical to their unit's mission.

Teams were made up from a cross-section of military occupational skills, creating an environment where teamwork was essential to get a 'go' on all tasks. Team members spent the time waiting for the evaluations by training and reviewing manuals to ensure each member would be able to pass.

"It's the best thing we can do to improve morale and the confidence in the knowledge base that the individual Soldiers have in their jobs," said Sgt. Michael Noyes, squad leader and chemical operations noncommissioned officer for HHD, 126th Chem Bn.

"It's kind of nice that they can have a competition where they can not only see where they stand amongst each other, but how well they know what to do in their jobs as well as what they need to work on," Noyes said. "It gives the Soldiers not only the opportunity to do their 'green' mission training, but also expand upon that and do things that they never really get the opportunity to do."

To provide those opportunities, unit recruiters operated the rappelling tower on Camp Ashland and arrangements were made for the Soldiers of the O'Neill; detachment to fly to Camp Ashland in a



Photo by Mark Roland

On the Ropes: A member of the 126th Chemical Battalion tackles a rappelling obstacle while participating in the Sept. 12-13 Dragon Challenge held at Camp Ashland, Neb.

Nebraska Army Guard CH-47 "Chinook" helicopters instead of conveying in vehicles.

There were other benefits to the training as well.

See DRAGON CHALLENGE on 24

Army Guard sergeant tackles Oregon's white water

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

The view was simply breathtaking.

Lying in a sleeping bag on the cold, hard ground as the crisp late summer air nipped at her nose and the dull roar of the nearby Deschutes River lulled her companions to sleep, Pam Whisenhunt stared upward into the dizzying black sky.

There, unfolding above her, the starry, dusty majesty of the Milky Way seemed to etch itself into the inky fabric of space. The 38-year-old Nebraska Army National Guard sergeant first class was flooded with wonderment.

"I've never seen so many stars before," said Whisenhunt, supply sergeant for the 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion.

Lying there after a full day of river activities in central Oregon, Whisenhunt said it was hard to realize the enormity of what she was seeing, let alone doing. Barely nine months removed from a year-long deployment to Iraq, Whisenhunt was now attempting to tackle a new, much more personal challenge.

Since deploying back to Nebraska last December, Whisenhunt had been working to get her unit's supply functions back into shape while also tending to her two growing daughters.

Family activities, work responsibilities... there just was never time enough during the daily grind to simply reflect upon her experiences in Iraq and life in general.

That was until she began a five-day white water rafting journey on Sept. 21, part of veterans outreach program called "Outward Bound." Funded by the Military Family Outdoor Initiative Project and a joint partnership of the Sierra Club and the Sierra Club Foundation, The Anschutz Family Foundation and the Disabled Veterans of America, the program offers 'enriching wilderness expeditions specifically designed for war veterans at no cost to the participants.'

The program includes such excursions as white water rafting, dog sledding, kayaking and sail boating.

Whisenhunt said she found out about Outward Bound while in Iraq.

"It just sounded interesting being able to go white water rafting for five days," said Whisenhunt, a self-professed nature lover. "I thought it would just be a fun thing to be able to do."

According to Outward Bound

organizers, the goal of the program is to give recently returned combat veterans an opportunity to build a support community amongst themselves while facilitating discussions on readjustment and transition challenges in an are-energizing and reinvigorating outdoor setting.

It is open to all Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom veterans who were deployed overseas in support of combat operations.

Whisenhunt enrolled in the program last October while still in Iraq, marking down three activities she was interested in. She found out that she'd been selected to participate in the white water rafting excursion this past January.

That's when the nerves hit. "I was really hesitant," she said. "I wanted to come home and be pampered. If I was going to go on vacation and spend my week somewhere, it wasn't going to be (going to the bathroom) in the forest (or going without) showers for five days."

Stewing about it for several months, Whisenhunt finally decided she had to continue on. "I told my husband before I left, well either good or bad, it's going to be an experience," she said.

After shopping for a few personal items, Whisenhunt set off for Oregon.

Arriving in Redmond, Ore., she and the other travelers were taken to a hotel for the night before meeting up with their instructors the next morning. Receiving additional gear, the group moved by van up the Deschutes River, stopping near the town of Madras where the group's base camp was set up.

Whisenhunt said her first view of the river was incredible.

"It was pretty awesome," she said, adding that unlike her expectation of a lush green forest environment, the river instead cut through high desert mountains and bluffs, often leaving brilliantly colored cliffs



Photo Courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class Pam Whisenhunt

On the River: Sgt. 1st Class Pam Whisenhunt (center) mugs for a camera with one of her raft mates while paddling down the Deschutes River in central Oregon in September. An Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran, Whisenhunt recently participated in "Outward Bound," a program that gives combat veterans a chance to experience the outdoors.

in their wake.

"We were on the other side of the mountains, so it was high desert... a lot of shrubs and stuff like that," she said. "But it was still beautiful with that river and those high cliffs."

She still couldn't shake her nervousness.

"I was excited, but a little apprehensive," she admitted. "Being in the military, you always have the feeling that something else can go wrong."

Formed into two four-person teams, Whisenhunt soon learned more about her traveling companions. There were several prior-service Marines, former Air Force members, a retired Navy woman and an Army Reservist. Together, the teams spent the majority of the first day simply learning how to work together and survive on the river.

"We got into the rafts and they taught us how to paddle," she said. "We (then) had to flip the boat so we would know how to get back on."

After learning some additional safety and equipment techniques, the group set off on the journey downstream. Whisenhunt said she quickly learned the expedition would be anything but what she'd expected.

"I expected to be on the river for five days rowing ten hours a day, so I was nervous because I really hadn't been working on my arms or lifting weights," she said. "But it wasn't at all like that."

Whisenhunt said the group

would paddle down the river for a few hours in the morning, often working their way through a few rapids.

They would then take a break and tackle a different challenge, like climbing a steep mountain trail, jumping from a cliff into the river below, learning how to rappel down the sheer rocky walls, or swimming into the icy current and learning how to take refuge behind protective rocks if they fell overboard.

They also spent time each day journaling or contemplating the experiences of the day.

Whisenhunt said the instructors constantly told the participants to "stay within the moment." That's why things like cellphones, the Internet and Ipods were expressly forbidden on the journey.

"We left all that stuff behind," she said. "They really concentrated on being here, being in the moment, taking it all in because it was going to go fast."

Whisenhunt said each afternoon the teams would paddle again for a few hours and then take a break for "personal time," allowing each of the participants to reflect upon the journey or other experiences within their lives. Whisenhunt quickly realized how important this was to the overall journey.

"It made me realize how distracted you can be... you just have all these outside distracters, all the stimulus around you," she said.

"Coming back home, people really don't have the chance to brain dump, you know? There's always something going on. There's always family that you've got to meet. There are always jobs that you've got to get back into. There's always house bills and stuff like that."

"This is just a great opportunity you don't get anywhere else that you can just forget all of that and actually be able to think about your thoughts and to understand that process," Whisenhunt added. "It's very

rare that you get that chance to have the time to process the things that you've been through, where you want to be."

Whisenhunt said that while traveling down the river the traveling party learned more about how hydrology makes the river function, how to map routes through boulder-strewn rapids and the importance that conservation plays in maintaining a healthy river ecosystem.

They also learned about their roles in conservation, about how ensuring the environment is left as pristine as what they found is extremely important.

The groups also talked during moments between navigating through the rapids, learning about each person's individual experiences as well as what they're doing today.

Each member of the team also took turns captaining the raft through the rapids.

"I'm thinking, 'How am I going to tell those guys which way I want to go, back or forward,'" she recalled. "That kind of intimidated me, but once you got the hang of it..."

Running the rapids was definitely an adrenaline booster, she said.

"That was kind of the exciting part when you hit those rapids," said Whisenhunt. "You get a little bit of an adrenaline rush, depending upon what size of rapids they were. Sometimes it was challenging, especially when you were the one who was captaining."

Still, the best time was at night, staring into the enormous depths of the Milky Way, Whisenhunt said. "It was just amazing... beautiful," she said. "We didn't have tents, we just laid down our sleeping bags and that's where we slept for the night."

"It would dip down into the 40s and you would feel a little nip on your nose or a little breeze in your sleeping bag," she added. "You have the roar of the rapids putting you to sleep... it was awesome."

Before long, the five-day journey was over. The discoveries made during the expedition, however, still remain according to Whisenhunt.

"I definitely got more appreciation for nature, the outdoors, quiet time... time for yourself," she said. "I mean, it was really just an experience of a lifetime that a lot of people don't get."

For more information about Outward Bound, check out the organization's Website at www.outwardbound.org.

DRAGON CHALLENGE

continued from page 23.

"It's really good for Soldiers who haven't been deployed," said Sgt. Lindsay Loftus, chemical operations NCO for HHD, 126th Chem. Bn. "These are some of the things that (Soldiers) that have been deployed have already been going through... It helps prepare us for deployment."

The final team building event was a five-kilometer road march.

At the award ceremony the prize of a commandant's coin from the Chemical Corps School was presented to the first place individual and team.

Along with winning the individual competition, Noyes was also the team leader for the first place team. Working with him were Spc. Delbert Goedeken and Pvt. Aamee Johnson, who are both chemical operations specialists with HHD, 126th Chem. Bn.

During the ceremony Loftus also received a commandant's coin for achieving the high score on the physical fitness test with a score of 299.

SHOOTING continued from page 23.

PRO 1st Place, Staff Sgt. Chad Engen

Team Competitions:

Match # 240M (General George S. Patton Combat Pistol Team Match - Requires a four-person team to engage six targets at various ranges concentrating on fire distribution.)

1st Place, LRS (Staff Sgt. Steven Brewer, Staff Sgt. Joshua Ames, Sgt. Chris Brammer, Sgt. Jonathan Terry); 2nd Place, FNG (Staff Sgt. Adam Borer, Sgt. Herschel Talley, Sgt. Nathan Rutter, Sgt. Jessie London); 3rd Place, WLC #1 (1st Sgt. Stephen Osier, Staff Sgt. Chad Engen, Staff Sgt. William McClure, Staff Sgt. Joseph Serkiz)

Match # 250 (Combat Pistol Team Championship - Combined aggregate of all four team members 225 Individual Aggregate and 240 General George S. Patton Combat Pistol Team Match.)

1st Place, LRS (Staff Sgt. Steven Brewer, Staff Sgt. Joshua Ames, Sgt. Chris Brammer, Sgt. Jonathan Terry); 2nd Place, FNG (Staff Sgt. Adam Borer, Sgt. Herschel Talley, Sgt. Nathan Rutter, Sgt. Jessie London); 3rd Place, RamRod (Sgt. Abraham Garcia, Sgt. Tyson Gould, Sgt. Kole Talkington, Sgt. Dustin Bruckner)

Match # 340 (General John J. Pershing Team Rifle Match - Requires a four-person team to engage six targets at various ranges concentrating on fire distribution.)

1st Place, Team S (Staff Sgt. Timothy Brewer, Pvt. Alexander Bristol, Spc. Jesse Daberkow, Sgt. Dennis Sedlacek); 2nd Place WLC #1 (1st Sgt. Stephen Osier, Staff Sgt. Chad Engen, Staff Sgt. William McClure, Staff Sgt. Joseph Serkiz); 3rd Place, Lost Boys (1st Lt. Clinton Brady, Sgt. Kurt Lillesten, Sgt. Chris Loomis, Sgt. Matthew Brown)

Match # 350 (Service Rifle Championship Team Championship - Combined

aggregate of all 4 team members 340 Pershing Team Score and 325 Individual Championship Score.)

1st Place, WLC #1 (1st Sgt. Stephen Osier, Staff Sgt. Chad Engen, Staff Sgt. William McClure, Staff Sgt. Joseph Serkiz); 2nd Place, LRS (Staff Sgt. Steven Brewer, Staff Sgt. Joshua Ames, Sgt. Chris Brammer, Sgt. Jonathan Terry); 3rd Place, Team S (Staff Sgt. Timothy Brewer, Pvt. Alexander Bristol, Spc. Jesse Daberkow, Sgt. Dennis Sedlacek)

Match # 355 (Team Assault Plate Match - Teams negotiated an obstacle course and then fired 10 rounds each at 12-inch plates from 200 yards.) 1st Place, OCS (Sgt. 1st Class Marc Sheehan, Staff Sgt. Deric Day, Staff Sgt. Jason Isaacs, 2nd Lt. Timothy Wobig); 2nd Place, RamRod (Sgt. Abraham Garcia, Sgt. Tyson Gould, Sgt. Kole Talkington, Sgt. Dustin Bruckner); 3rd Place, FNG (Staff Sgt. Adam Borer, Sgt. Herschel Talley, Sgt. Nathan Rutter, Sgt. Jessie London)

Match 625 (Gary Anderson Trophy - This award was created in 2007 and is awarded to the shooter who has the highest combined aggregate in Match 221 and 321. Gary Anderson is a former Nebraska National Guard shooter who is now the director of the Civilian Marksmanship Program.)

Staff Sgt. Adam Borer, HQ, 209th RTI

Match 621 (The State Sergeant Major's Match - The winner of this match is the shooter with the highest combined aggregate scores in the Service Rifle and Service Pistol disciplines.)

Staff Sgt. Adam Borer, HQ, 209th RTI

Match 650 (The Adjutant General's Team Trophy - This award is given to the top overall team.)

LRS (Staff Sgt. Steven Brewer, Staff Sgt. Joshua Ames, Sgt. Chris Brammer, Sgt. Jonathan Terry)